

"THE WHEEL OF DEATH"

written by

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THE WHEEL OF DEATH

FADE IN:

EXT. FAIRGROUND/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The empty parking lot of a county fairground. A Ferris wheel looms in the distance, illuminated by the full moon. An old, rusty pickup truck coasts to a stop.

The slim form of A MAN dressed all in black emerges from the vehicle. He reaches inside and grabs a large bundle, hoists it onto his shoulder, and walks matter-of-factly toward the park's entrance.

EXT. FAIRGROUND - NIGHT

A NIGHT WATCHMAN sits on a bench with large planters on either side. Nearby stand two metal reinforced portable buildings with small porches. Their doors are stenciled military style: 01 and 02.

The only light other than moonlight is from his CELL PHONE, on which he is watching an old western movie.

ON THE PHONE SCREEN

a BLACK HAT COWBOY in a mask points a long pistol at a WHITE HAT COWBOY, whose hands are raised. A moments pause, then a SHOT. White Hat looks dumbfounded as Black Hat falls. White Hat looks offscreen to see. . .

EXT. CHAIN LINK FENCE - NIGHT

The Man tosses a rolled up piece of carpet onto the concertina wire atop the chain link fence. He silently climbs the fence and drops down on the other side.

THE NIGHT WATCHMAN

switches off his phone, chuckling, and heaves himself up from the chair. He picks up a long flashlight from the table and adjusts his weapons belt. His hand hovers over his pistol, prepared to draw.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

(John Wayne voice)

You may need me and this  
Winchester, Curly.

Satisfied with his Duke impression, he strolls away, shining the flashlight here and there idly as he goes.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/WOODS - NIGHT

Through leaves The Man sees the night watchman and his little beam of light move away from the Midway.

THE NIGHT WATCHMAN

walks slowly past rows of silent, dark carnival rides. His flashlight illuminates a colorful sign: THE WESTERN SWING. He walks on, shines the light again: THE ROUND-UP.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/OUTSIDE SECURITY ROOM 02 - NIGHT

The Man stands before a PADLOCKED DOOR. It is stenciled '02'. He reaches under the back of his jacket and pulls out a BOLT CUTTER. He cuts one padlock and shoves it into a pocket, then cuts the other, which falls with a CLANG onto the metal mesh porch.

THE NIGHT WATCHMAN

has heard a sound and swings the flashlight around toward its source. He moves cautiously past a row of closed-up

carnival game booths. His flashlight sweeps over a sign: SITTIN' DUCK'S SHOOTIN' RANGE. He walks on in the moonlight, casting a small shadow.

INT. SECURITY ROOM 02 - NIGHT

A wood-paneled room with a desk, a table and a few chairs. A bank of SECURITY MONITORS covers one wall, but everything is turned off and the room is illuminated only by moonlight from a window that looks out onto the Midway. A row of METAL LOCKERS stands against one wall.

The Man cuts the padlock from one of the lockers and opens it. Inside are two rifles, two pistols and various ammunition clips.

THE NIGHT WATCHMAN

creeps past a row of zoo cages with metal bars. Animal forms move within. He shines the light on a TIGER that is stretched out on an artificial tree branch. It GROWLS menacingly, showing its teeth.

He backs away from the tiger cage and into a netted wall. An EXOTIC BIRD CALLS out, startling him.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

The Man removes a semi-automatic rifle, a pistol and all the ammunition clips from the locker, then places something we cannot see inside. He closes the locker and places a new padlock on, clicking it into place.

He goes to the window and stands, looking out onto the moonlit Midway. The Ferris wheel towers before him amongst the smaller silhouettes of other amusement rides.

Swiftly but calmly, the rifle slung over his back, he

leaves the security room, closing the door behind him.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/OUTSIDE SECURITY ROOM 02 - NIGHT

The Man reaches into a vest pocket and produces two new padlocks identical to the ones that were on the outer door. He locks one into place.

THE NIGHT WATCHMAN

is moving along the side of a portable building. One hand hovers over his holstered gun and the other trembles slightly as it holds the flashlight.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

(under his breath)

Jesus, i need this.

He jumps when he hears a metallic CLANK coming from just up ahead, around the corner of the building. He draws his gun and advances, breathing heavily.

NIGHT WATCHMAN (CONT'D)

Park security! Who's there?

EXT. FAIRGROUND/WOODS - NIGHT

The Man is in a WOODED AREA on the edge of the fairgrounds. He bends down and lifts a piece of plywood, exposing a large hole in the ground.

He places the guns and ammunition inside and replaces the plywood. He pulls dirt and leaves onto the wood and drags a nearby pile of brush over it.

THE NIGHT WATCHMAN

creeps to the corner of the building and presses himself

against the wall. He crosses himself with his gun and leaps around the corner, simultaneously shining the light and pointing the gun at the source of the sound.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

Freeze!

His flashlight illuminates a RACCOON, which stands atop a metal trash can, licking at an empty can of beans.

The lid of the trash can lies on the concrete nearby. Caught in the light, the raccoon drops the bean can. It falls with a CLANK. The watchman breathes a sigh of relief and holsters his gun.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The rusty pick-up sputters, then starts with a ROAR and swings away, leaving the silent parking lot and the distant Ferris wheel bathed in moonlight.

EXT. LAKE OF BLOOD - NIGHT

A Ferris wheel is half-submerged in a lake of blood beneath a gloomy sky that roils with grey and black clouds. Flashes of white light occasionally illuminate the clouds from within.

The wheel moves slowly, its gondolas emerging on one side like buckets filled with blood, pouring down as they rise, and on the other side moving inexorably back into the sunken depths. A perverted water wheel.

INT. GONDOLA (MOVING)/LAKE OF BLOOD - NIGHT

A MAN wrestles with a restraining lap bar, trying to free himself from the gondola, which descends slowly toward the

lake of blood.

Blood starts to pour in, covering his shoes. Trapped, he begins to panic. It rises to his waist, to his shoulders. His view descends beneath the engulfing red waters.

INT. THE CARNY'S TRAILER - MORNING

The Man starts awake, inhaling dramatically. He stops, realizing it has been a dream. He quickly brings his breathing under control.

He is THE CARNY (late-30s), a thin man with dark hair and tattoos scattered across his wiry arms. He blinks once, then stares straight ahead.

INT. TRAILER HOUSE/SAMANTHA'S ROOM - MORNING

A vintage flip alarm clock turns over the time, 6:30 A.M., and starts playing an indie college radio song. A hand with black painted fingernails slaps it quiet.

SAMANTHA PARRISH, a young woman of about 16, drags herself into a sitting position on the bed. She gazes around her cluttered room with a jaded look as if to say: "Oh great, this place again."

INT. THE CARNY'S TRAILER - MORNING

The Carny stands at the kitchen counter of his older model Airstream trailer. He methodically spreads mayonnaise onto slices of white bread. A package of bologna, some processed cheese slices and several bottles of prescription pills sit nearby.

Early light through a small window over the sink illuminates his impassive face.

INT. SAMANTHA'S TRAILER/HALLWAY - MORNING

Now dressed in camouflage pants, black tank top and combat boots, a backpack slung on one shoulder, Samantha walks to

THE LIVING ROOM

where her mother SUZI PARRISH (mid-30's), sleeps sitting up on a tacky couch. Next to her, slumped across the other half of the couch is Suzi's boyfriend ROY (mid-20's).

Half-empty bottles of vodka, beer cans and overflowing ashtrays litter the table. Samantha regards them silently for a moment, then strides to the dining room table and drops her backpack onto it with a THUD.

Suzi stirs, shaking off the haze of last night's festivities.

SUZI

What the hell, Samantha? Can't  
you see we're sleeping here?

Samantha doesn't answer. ROY rouses himself, picks up a nearby beer can and downs its remaining contents.

ROY

You hard of hearing? Your  
mother's talking to you.

SAMANTHA

Fuck you, Roy.

SUZI

Hey let's watch the mouth, huh?



ROY

Yeah, Samantha. Watch your fuckin' mouth or I'll kick that scrawny little ass for you.

He laughs and grabs a handful of Suzi's ass as she drags herself from the couch. Suzi picks up a vodka bottle and pours some into a dirty glass on the dining room table.

Samantha regards them both with disgust and goes into

THE KITCHEN

where she opens the refrigerator. There is nothing inside that passes for a meal. Samantha sighs and grabs a carton of orange juice.

She closes the refrigerator, revealing Suzi standing there looking disheveled in yesterday's clothes. She takes the carton as if Samantha had intended to hand it to her.

SUZI

Thanks, baby.

She pours all the juice from the carton into her glass of vodka and downs it.

SAMANTHA

There's nothing in here to eat.

SUZI

I'm sorry, honey. I didn't get a chance to get to the grocery store.

SAMANTHA

At least give me some money for lunch.

SUZI

Well, baby, I didn't make it to the ATM either. Ask Roy. I bet if you ask him real nice he'll give you some.

Roy rises from the couch and gives an exaggerated belly laugh, then stops. He looks at Samantha with a deadpan expression.

ROY

No.

SAMANTHA

Fuck you, Roy.

She grabs her backpack from the table and storms to the front door.

SUZI

(shouting after her)

You watch that mouth!

EXT. TRAILER PARK/SAMANTHA'S TRAILER - MORNING

She bolts out of the dilapidated trailer house, not bothering to close the door. Behind her in the doorway Roy sucks on the bottle of vodka. He smiles and closes the door.

Samantha, her face red with anger, stops and turns her head at the sound of a TRUCK ENGINE struggling to turn over. She watches as The Carny gets out of his rusty pick-up, which is parked in front of his rusty Airstream trailer. He opens the hood and begins fiddling with the engine.

He goes back to the drivers seat and tries the key again. The truck ROARS to life. He gets out and lowers the hood

with a BANG, then stops, feeling Samantha's gaze upon him.

He turns his head slowly and looks at her. Their eyes lock for a long moment, then he gets back into his truck and drives away through the trailer park.

Samantha watches him go with a look of unease.

EXT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

The hospital building is a dark rectangle, barely illuminated by the early morning light. The BIRTH-CRY of a baby is heard.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

A BABY has just been born. Its wrinkled, purple face cries out with eyes closed.

A nurse, BETSY BARNES (early 40s), takes the baby from the DOCTOR, holding it while he sets to work cutting the umbilical cord. No father accompanies the YOUNG WOMAN who has just given birth.

Nurse Barnes wipes the baby down with a towel and places it on the chest of the new mother, who strokes it, smiling through her obvious exhaustion. Betsy smiles back at her.

INT. HOSPITAL/LOCKER ROOM - MORNING

Betsy, still dressed in her scrubs, washes her hands at a sink. Another NURSE enters and begins to wash up.

NURSE

Another double?

BETSY

Yep. All i want to do now is  
go home and crawl under the covers.

NURSE

Well, you've earned it. Say,  
did that guy ever call you?

Betsy moves to her locker, opens it and takes out her  
jacket and purse.

BETSY

(chuckling)

Bradley. The oral surgeon.  
Yeah, we went out.

NURSE

Well?

BETSY

Before the date was over i wanted  
to wire *his* jaw shut.

They have a quiet laugh. Betsy salutes the other nurse and  
exits.

INT/EXT. BETSY'S CAR (MOVING)/FREEWAY - MORNING

Betsy putts along the freeway in her little yellow  
hatchback. She fusses with a pile of papers on the  
passenger seat. She adjusts the mirror. She fiddles with  
the radio and finds a tune.

Drifting into an adjacent lane, she receives a HONK from  
it's rightful inhabitant.

BETSY

Sorry, sorry.

She weaves back into her lane and takes the next exit without signaling, cutting off another driver, who must apply brakes to avoid a collision.

BETSY

(into rear view  
mirror)

Sorry.

INT/EXT. BETSY'S CAR (MOVING)/PARKING LOT - MORNING

She drives through a mostly abandoned supermarket parking lot and finds a space near the front, taking up part of a second for good measure.

INT. SUPERMARKET - MORNING

Strolling the supermarket aisle, somewhat zombiefied from the long work shift, she props herself on the rolling cart, which contains a small pile of barely-related food items. A MUZAK version of classic rock plays through the store's speakers.

She rounds an aisle, heading toward the PRODUCE SECTION and stops in her tracks. She is staring at an attractive middle-aged man, JACK STANTON (50-ish), who is standing by a pyramid-shaped pile of melons.

He picks up an unfamiliar fruit from a nearby bin, looks at it quizzically, then gives it a smell. Whew! He reacts to the strange, strong odor. Betsy laughs to herself, watching him from behind the end of the aisle.

He picks up a cantaloupe in both hands, smells it, then sets it back down. He pulls another one from the display and several roll loose, tumbling to the floor.

Jack scrambles here and there, picking up the rolling fruits. One rolls to the front of Betsy's shopping cart and stops. She slowly bends, picks up the cantaloupe, and strolls with it toward him. He is re-stacking the pile of melons.

BETSY

Hey, this one almost got away.

JACK

Thanks.

He smells the cantaloupe and smiles at Betsy.

JACK (CONT'D)

Perfect.

They stare silently at each other for a moment. She breaks the silence.

BETSY

I better get a move on.

JACK

Uh, yeah. Thanks again.

He follows as she retrieves her cart and watches her roll away down the aisle. He looks like he wants to say something, but stops and turns away, just missing her quick backward look over the shoulder.

EXT. SUPERMARKET/PARKING LOT - DAY

Betsy places a few bags of groceries in the hatch-back of her car, slams it shut, and moves to the driver's side door.

INT. BETSY'S CAR (PARKED) - DAY

She starts the car, rolls down the window and adjusts her side mirror. She wiggles in her seat and puts on her seat belt, then turns on the radio and flips through until she finds a suitable tune.

She checks her look in the rearview mirror, gives herself a smile, then puts the car in reverse and backs out without looking. BAM! She has backed into the front of a passing car.

INT. OTHER CAR (STOPPED) - DAY

The car's DRIVER sees Betsy getting out of her car. He puts his car in park.

EXT. SUPERMARKET/PARKING LOT - DAY

Betsy has exited her car as the driver of the other car is getting out.

BETSY

Sorry, sorry.

She does a double take. It is the man she met in the produce section. He smiles at her.

JACK

Maybe this is a good time to ask your name.

BETSY

Oh gosh, look at what i did. I'm Betsy. I'm so sorry.

JACK

It's OK. I'm Jack.

He extends his hand to her and they shake, holding the grip a bit overlong.

BETSY

Uh, let me get my insurance card.

She indicates the messy interior of her car. Jack watches for a while as she digs around in the front seat.

BETSY (CONT'D)

I know it's in there somewhere.

JACK

I'll tell you what. Why don't you join me for breakfast and we'll get this all figured out later.

BETSY

Are you sure? I mean, I really dented your poor car.

JACK

What, that? It's nothing. It's just a scratch.

It's not.

BETSY

Well OK, I guess, if you say so. Did you have some place in mind?

JACK

I know a great little diner just a couple of miles from here. You can follow me there if you like. If you're hungry.



BETSY

I could eat. Sure, lead the way.

Jack smiles with relief. It's obviously not been easy for him to ask.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/ENTRANCE - DAY

Samantha approaches the school, an older brick building surrounded by chain link fences. STUDENTS mill around outside, waiting for the last possible minute to go in.

A GROUP OF TEENS seem to stare at her as she nears the school entrance. One of them, a muscle-bound youth named BILLY, whispers to one of his COHORTS, who laughs. Samantha glares at them, then looks away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/SECURITY CHECK - DAY

Her bag is inspected by a heavysset security woman in gloves, then she is sent through a metal detector, merging into the throng of students who fill the school's main hallway.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Samantha sits at her desk in the back of the nondescript classroom. An ornately bound black NOTEBOOK sits unopened on her desktop.

The other STUDENTS in the class all seem to be brightly dressed PREPPIE TYPES, JOCKS and CHEERLEADERS, starkly contrasting with her own dark clothing and makeup.

The TEACHER, a paunchy, middle-aged guy with a mustache blathers on inaudibly in the background.

Samantha looks tired and her eyes close partially and re-open several times. They close for a longer moment and when they open again the teacher is drawing a large chalk circle on the blackboard. He steps to the side and points to it with a stick, his back still turned to the class.

She looks around the room. Something is wrong. The students are all sitting up in their desks, but they are immobile. Some still hold pens to paper and one girl holds her cellphone as if texting, but her thumbs do not move.

Samantha looks at the student in the desk next to hers - an attractive JOCK TYPE - and notices that he has a perfectly round red hole in his temple. Blood begins to slowly pour down from the hole in a steady stream, as if someone had removed the stopper from a barrel.

Then she sees that each student has a bleeding wound somewhere on their body and the blood pours down from each one, forming red rivulets on the black and white checkered floor.

Everything moves slowly, dream-like. Each stream of blood flows toward her desk as if there were an invisible drain beneath it. The streams merge and form a pool beneath her. She lifts her feet to keep her shoes from the muck.

The teacher continues to write on the blackboard, oblivious to the mass carnage.

She looks down at the surface of her desk. Where the notebook had been, there is a SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLE. Snub-nosed, black and shiny, covered with every conceivable accessory. It perches there like some deadly beetle.

She looks up as the teacher turns around, but it is not the teacher of her class. It is The Carny dressed in the teacher's corduroy jacket with elbow patches. He stares at

her and his face slowly breaks into a smile.

She stares aghast. The SCHOOL BELL RINGS and Samantha comes to. A group of TEENS is standing around her desk as other students leave the classroom.

A GIRL with a HALF-SHAVED HEAD and nose rings is waving her hand in front of Samantha's face.

HALF-SHAVED HEAD GIRL

Bueller. . . Bueller. . .HAHAHA!

She laughs a crazy laugh and smacks at her gum. Billy comes into focus. He is staring at Samantha, shaking his head in disgust.

BILLY

Come on guys, this shit might  
be contagious.

The group turns and leaves the classroom, laughing and horse-playing as they go and shaking their heads in imitation of Billy.

Samantha looks back at her desk. The gun is gone and the notebook in its place. She looks up at the Teacher, now back to his original form. He stares back at her with a look of barely-concealed disdain.

She grabs her notebook, pushes it into her backpack and hurriedly exits the classroom.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

The Carny's truck pulls up in front of a convenience store. He gets out and enters through a set of glass doors. A CLERK sits behind the counter reading a magazine. He

doesn't look up.

The Carny pours a cup of coffee, black, then moves to the counter where the store's only other CUSTOMER is checking out. The customer glances at The Carny, who stares back at him with dead, unblinking eyes. The customer looks away and finishes his transaction, then looks back again. The Carny still stares.

CUSTOMER

What are you looking at?

The Carny says nothing, but does not look away. He does not blink. He continues to stare at the man.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)

Hey buddy, what's the matter with you? You some kind of weirdo?

The Carny pulls a PISTOL with a SILENCER from his belt and calmly shoots the man in the head. This gets the Clerk's attention and he raises his hands, dropping the magazine.

CLERK

Hey man, don't shoot. Take whatever you want. I didn't see anything.

The Carny looks at him for a long moment. He reaches in his front pocket and places two crumpled dollar bills onto the blood-flecked counter. The Clerk is confused at first, then a look of relief crosses his face. He says nothing and stands stock still, arms raised.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

From outside the store The Carny and the Clerk are visible inside, a frozen tableau, like a window display.

No sound is heard as the clerk falls to the floor. Blood spatters the myriad tiny items affixed to the wall behind him. The Carny stands there a moment, then moves around behind the counter and ducks down out of sight.

Another moment and he exits the store, locking the glass doors with a key. He gets in his still running truck, backs out and drives away.

INT. DINER - DAY

Jack and Betsy sit in a booth at an Art Deco styled chrome and glass diner. A vintage looking miniature jukebox sits on the table between them playing classic 50s and 60s tunes. The Ferris wheel at the fairgrounds across the street arches in the window beside them, slowly turning.

A waiter fills their coffee cups and removes the used plates. Betsy pours about half the sugar container into her cup. Jack drinks his black.

JACK

Where was I?

BETSY

You retired from the police force, uh, five years ago and now you're a private detective. God, that seems like really interesting work.

JACK

It can be. But if i'm being honest, it can get a bit lonely sometimes.

BETSY

Is that so?

JACK

Talking with you right now is  
the most words I've said to  
another human being in - well,  
in I don't know how long.

BETSY

So why did you retire so early?  
From the force i mean.

JACK

I don't want to bore you with  
all this stuff. It's ancient  
history.

BETSY

No, please. I really want to  
know.

JACK

Well, OK. So about six years ago my wife  
was diagnosed with cancer.

At the mention of the word 'wife' Betsy winces a little,  
but tries to hide her feelings by putting on her listening  
face.

JACK (CONT'D)

For the first year or so things  
weren't too bad. She drove herself  
to chemotherapy during the day and  
I kept on working as usual. But  
after a while she got worse. She  
couldn't make the drive anymore  
and she needed me there to take

care of her. So I took an early retirement and - long story short - she passed away after about a year.

Betsy reaches out and takes his hand.

JACK (CONT'D)

I thought about rejoining the force, but I was just too - broken I guess you could say. So eventually I set up a little private detective business in a strip center near my house. Figured that way I could keep busy without inflicting myself too much on the world at large.

He chuckles wryly. She looks at him with compassion and dabs at her eyes with a napkin, being careful not to smear the makeup.

JACK (CONT'D)

But anyway, that's way too much about me. Let's talk about you. You mentioned you're a nurse. What got you into that line of work?

BETSY

Well, after high school I was just sort of - drifting. I worked every kind of odd job you can imagine. A girl I worked in an office with said she was going to night school, studying to become a nurse and that sounded like a good job. So I spent the next two years taking classes after

work. I got a job offer at a hospital in Phoenix and spent a few years there. Then I got a better post. This this this and that and now i'm head maternity nurse at Sutter General.

The waiter brings the check, diplomatically placing it midway between them. They both reach for it, but her hand arrives first.

BETSY (CONT'D)

Uh uh uh. I've got this.

JACK

But i asked *you*.

BETSY

And i'm glad you did.

She takes a wallet from her purse and begins to place bills onto the table. Jack smiles, an idea crossing his face.

JACK

Tell you what. I'll let you pay for the check but you've got to let me pay for you to go to the fairgrounds with me. We can walk off the bacon and eggs.

BETSY

"Let me pay"? Alright Mr. Man. I'll "let" you escort me around the fairground. But i have to go home first and change. I'll meet you at the front entrance in - say an hour?



JACK  
(checks his watch)  
An hour. OK.

She smiles at him and takes a last gulp of coffee, then picks up her coat and they leave the table. The Ferris wheel fills the window of the deserted booth.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/HALLWAY - DAY

Samantha, still shaken from her disturbing vision, makes her way down the school's hallway. A woman's VOICE rings out behind her.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Hey, Samantha!

She turns to see a familiar face peering through a doorway. It is MISS HARMON (late 30's), Samantha's English teacher. A small smile, the first we've seen from her, crosses Samantha's face. She turns and walks back toward Miss Harmon.

MISS HARMON  
Come in for a second, let's talk.

She follows the teacher into

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/MISS HARMON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

an empty classroom with a large shelf of nicely bound books covering part of one wall.

SAMANTHA  
What's up, Miss Harmon?

MISS HARMON

I wanted to have a little talk  
with you, if you have a minute.

SAMANTHA

Sure. My next class is gym. They  
probably won't even notice I'm not  
there.

Miss Harmon pulls her chair around from behind the desk and  
grabs another from a small stack near the door, placing it  
near hers. Samantha sits, placing her backpack on the  
floor.

MISS HARMON

First of all, I finished your  
short story. Actually, I couldn't  
put it down. It's very, very good.

SAMANTHA

Thanks, Miss Harmon.

MISS HARMON

Call me Sarah. Miss Harmon makes  
me sound so - well - so old.

SAMANTHA

OK. Sarah it is.

MISS HARMON

There's just one thing, though.  
The violence. Your prose is truly  
astounding. You're a very talented  
young lady. But does everything  
you write have to be so - bloody?

SAMANTHA

I don't try to make it bloody.

It just sort of comes out that way.

MISS HARMON

Look, Samantha, I love your writing. I'm a fan. But some of the other teachers are – concerned. I understand you have to follow your own path. But could you maybe tone it down just a little? It does no good to antagonize these people.

SAMANTHA

I think I see where you're coming from. I can try.

Miss Harmon gets up and moves to her desk as STUDENTS begin to filter into the classroom. She opens the desk drawer and removes something. Samantha rises, straps on her backpack and puts the chair back in the corner.

MISS HARMON

I got you something.

She hands Samantha a vintage fountain pen, the kind with a pointed metal nib, and two extra ink cartridges.

SAMANTHA

Thanks Miss – thanks Sarah.

Samantha removes the cap of the pen and runs her finger over its shiny point, then replaces the cap.

MISS HARMON

I know you like to write your stories longhand. I saw this at a garage sale last weekend and thought of you.

SAMANTHA

Thanks again. I really appreciate  
it. Everything.

MISS HARMON

You're quite welcome. Now i guess  
you'd better get on to - gym was it?

SAMANTHA

Oh joy.

She smiles her little smile and leaves the room. Miss  
Harmon watches her go.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/HALLWAY - DAY

Samantha walks down the hall, her eyes downcast, still  
holding the fountain pen in her hand. Suddenly another  
VOICE calls out to her.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, Samantha!

She looks up to see Billy and two of his Cohorts standing  
directly in her path.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Why are you so fucking spooky?

SAMANTHA

What's your problem, Billy?

BILLY

You're my problem, Spooky Sammie.  
You're everybody's problem.

SAMANTHA

Get out of my way.

She tries to push past them but one of Billy's henchmen holds her back.

BILLY

Hey, I'm not done talking to you.

HALF-SHAVED HEAD GIRL

She's not worth it Billy.  
Anyways, she'll probably come back to school with a gun.

Samantha grips the fountain pen tighter in her hand.

BILLY

Is that right, Spooky Sammie?  
Are you the school shooter?

SAMANTHA

Guns are for pussies. I prefer to do my killing up close and -

Her fingers remove the pen's cap. It drops to the ground.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

- personal!

She shoves the pointed nib against Billy's crotch. He backs up against the wall of lockers, hands raised. Billy's posse looks to him in confusion. They've never seen him look scared and they don't know what to do.

BILLY

OK, OK! Whatever you've got pressed up against my balls, just

put it down, OK?

SAMANTHA

Say you're sorry.

She moves the pen closer. He feels the sharp edge pressing against his flesh.

SAMANTHA

Say it!

BILLY

Alright. I'm sorry, OK?

Samantha slowly withdraws the pen from proximity to his manhood.

SAMANTHA

I know you are.

Suddenly a SCHOOL SECURITY GUARD and some TEACHERS arrive and pull her away. The fountain pen falls to the floor.

Billy breathes a sigh of relief as his friends stare at him.

BILLY

What are you all looking at?

INT. JACK'S CAR (PARKED) - FAIRGROUNDS/PARKING LOT - DAY

Jack sits in his car, parked near the entrance to the fairgrounds. Beside him a station wagon pulls in and a heavysset, ANGRY MAN, his WIFE and two RED-HEADED CHILDREN, a BOY and a GIRL, jump out. The children careen around the parking lot like two unattended tops, the boy waving a red plastic water pistol.

Jack can hear their muffled conversation as they exit the wagon.

ANGRY MAN

Goddammit, Doris! Get control  
of your kids or we're going home!  
I swear to God! Zachary! Get back  
here right now! Aagh!

WIFE

Zachary! Emily! Don't upset your  
father. He was nice enough to let  
you skip school today 'cause he  
doesn't like crowds.

He watches as they walk toward the turnstiles at the park's entrance. The children run ahead of them, waving their arms wildly.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

A car pulls in to the convenience store and parks. A MAN gets out and walks to the door. He pulls the handle. Locked. He waits a second then pulls again. Still locked.

Frustrated, he shakes his head and goes back to his car without looking inside.

INT. PRINCIPAL GIFFORD'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Samantha sits in a chair in the Principal's outer office. She looks down, stewing angrily. A secretary, MISS APPLGATE (early 30s) sits behind a desk, busy at her computer.

The door to the hallway opens and Samantha's mom comes in. She is dressed in her flashy 'going-out' clothes now and well on her way to Topsyville.

The Secretary looks up when she enters and forces a smile.

MISS APPLGATE

Hello, Mrs. Parrish. I'll let  
Mr. Gifford know you're here.

She rises and moves to the inner office door. She knocks quietly, then enters and closes the door behind her.

SUZI

What have you done this time?

Samantha says nothing. The inner office door opens and Miss Applegate comes out. PRINCIPAL GIFFORD (mid-50s), stands in the doorway.

PRINCIPAL GIFFORD

Come in Mrs. Parrish. Samantha.

INT. PRINCIPAL GIFFORD'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Gifford moves behind his desk.

PRINCIPAL GIFFORD

Have a seat Samantha. Suzi.

They seat themselves in chairs opposite his desk.

PRINCIPAL GIFFORD

(to Suzi)

Did Miss Applegate fill you in  
on why we called you here today?



SUZI

I figure she did something stupid.

(glares at Samantha)

Again.

Samantha doesn't look at either of them. She is staring at her confiscated fountain pen, which sits near her on the principal's desk.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Samantha and her mom walk down an empty school hallway, toward the sunlight at the front entrance.

SUZI

I know you were just standing up for yourself baby, but Jesus, did you have to go for the kid's balls?

SAMANTHA

He'll survive.

SUZI

You're lucky Gifford didn't throw the book at you. You know, some men don't take kindly to that sort of thing. What would your father have thought?

They reach the school entranceway and exit to the

EXT. FRONT OF THE SCHOOL - DAY

where Roy is waiting in a beat-up early 70s Mustang convertible. The passenger side door, front panel and back panel are of three different colors.

SAMANTHA

What would dad have thought  
about you and Roy?

SUZI

Oh, Roy's alright. He keeps  
me company. You know i can't  
stand to be alone.

They arrive at the car. Roy wears a Hawaiian shirt over a  
Jaws t-shirt and a straw boater hat.

ROY

Damn, woman! What took you so  
long? I 'bout died of boredom.

Suzi lifts the passenger seat to let Samantha into the  
back, then climbs into the front seat.

INT/EXT. ROY'S CAR - DAY

ROY (CONT'D)

What'd she do?  
(turns around to  
look at Samantha)  
Did she kill somebody?

Suzi grabs a near-empty bottle of vodka from the glove box  
and polishes it off. She pulls out another, twists it open  
and passes it to Roy.

SAMANTHA

I see you're wearing a shirt,  
Roy. What's the special occasion?

ROY

Me and your mom's going to the  
carnival. You should come with

us and quit being so gloomy all  
the time.

He takes a mighty swig from the bottle.

ROY (CONT'D)  
Nobody likes a gloomy fuckin' kid.

SAMANTHA  
(matter-of-factly)  
Fuck you Roy.

SUZI  
(also matter-of-factly)  
Watch that mouth.

Suzi pulls lipstick from her purse and begins applying it,  
checking her look in the small mirror on the sun visor.

SAMANTHA  
Can't I just walk home?

SUZI  
No, you cannot.

SAMANTHA  
Why not?

SUZI  
We loaned the house to Roy's  
brother for the afternoon.

ROY  
He's got a hot date.

Roy revs the engine and lets out a whoop as the car peels  
out and speeds away.

INT/EXT. JACK'S CAR (PARKED) - FAIRGROUND/PARKING LOT - DAY

Jack's older model CROWN VIC is still parked at the fairgrounds. He sits tapping his fingers on the steering wheel to the beat of a song on the radio. He watches through the windshield as people park and walk toward the ticket booth. He checks the time on a digital watch.

A low RUMBLE is heard and The Carny's rusty, ancient pickup truck pulls in beside the Crown Vic.

INT. CARNY'S TRUCK (PARKED) - FAIRGROUND/PARKING LOT - DAY

The Carny reaches beneath the bench seat and pulls out the pistol with its attached silencer. He holds it in his lap and unscrews the silencer from the gun. He puts the pistol back under the seat and places the silencer in an inside pocket of his black army jacket.

INT. JACK'S CAR (PARKED) - FAIRGROUNDS/PARKING LOT - DAY

Jack looks at The Carny through his passenger side window. The Carny turns and stares directly at him for a moment, then gets out of the truck and walks toward the park entrance. He carries a brown paper bag.

A look of concern crosses Jack's face. He opens his glove box, removes a REVOLVER and tucks it into an inside pocket of his jacket.

There is a TAP on his driver side window. His head swivels. The look of concern turns to a broad smile.

Betsy is standing outside his car, beaming a smile of her own. She waves to him.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/TICKET BOOTH - DAY

Betsy and Jack are in the short line to buy tickets. She has changed from her nurse's uniform into a brightly colored blouse and jacket, medium-length skirt and sensible shoes. They move up gradually through the line as they talk.

BETSY

Sorry it took so long. Traffic was a killer.

JACK

No problem. It was worth the wait. You look wonderful.

She feign-blushes and curtsies a little.

BETSY

Why thank you, sir.

They look at each other for a long moment.

TICKET SELLER

Sir. Sir?

JACK

Oh, yes.

Jack pushes some bills across the counter and takes the tickets. He hands one to Betsy.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

A minivan pulls in to the store and parks. A TEENAGE GIRL gets out of the passenger side and jogs to the door. She

tries the handle. Locked. She cups her hands to the glass and looks inside.

She stands frozen for a moment, then walks slowly to the driver side window of the van.

TEENAGE GIRL

Uh, dad. I think you need to see this.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/TURNSTILES - DAY

Jack and Betsy wait in the small line with their tickets. Jack scans the crowd. His eyes meet those of a SECURITY GUARD and he looks away.

Fairgoers enter, the turnstiles flip. Betsy and Jack show their tickets to the ATTENDANT and pass through.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/TICKET BOOTH - DAY

Roy has picked up three tickets while Suzi waits with Samantha near the turnstiles. Roy hands Samantha her ticket.

ROY

You owe me twenty dollars.

Samantha glares at him and swipes the ticket from his hand. They move through the turnstiles, where the Security Guard stops them with a hand.

A man approaches the Guard. He is a short and muscular with a shiny bald pate and wears a tan blazer over a white shirt. This is JOE 'CURLY' SIMMS (mid-50s), the park's head of security.

He stands on his tip-toes and whispers into the Guard's ear. Samantha notices the PISTOL that Curly wears beneath his jacket, tucked discreetly into a shoulder holster.

The Guard to whom Curly whispers wears a black t-shirt and jacket with the word 'SECURITY' emblazoned on the back in white. His last name, DELPHINA, is stitched above the breast pocket.

Delphina gives Samantha's backpack a cursory inspection and hands it back to her. Roy and Suzi walk ahead of Samantha as they enter the park. Samantha gives a concerned look back over her shoulder, then continues on. We stay with

CURLY

who addresses Delphina gravely.

CURLY

Delphina, where are Larsson and  
Moretti?

DELPHINA

I haven't seen 'em in an hour  
or so. I think they're out on  
foot patrol.

Frustrated, Curly removes a walkie-talkie from his belt and speaks into it.

CURLY

Moretti! Larsson! Where  
the hell are you two?

Moretti

(through walkie-talkie)  
We're making the rounds, Mr.

Simms.

CURLY

Well get your asses back  
here. Now!

EXT. ZOO AREA - DAY

Moretti and Larsson, both wearing uniforms similar to Delphina's, are walking past a row of cages holding exotic birds, small monkeys and other animals. Neither of the men carries a firearm.

MORETTI

(into walkie-talkie)

Yes sir. We'll be right there.

Larsson and Moretti give each other a look.

LARSSON

God, what an asshole.

MORETTI

Tell me about it.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

The Ferris wheel sits motionless in the clear October sky. A sign at its base announces its name: 'THE WHEEL OF LIFE'.

The Carny lowers the lap bar across the waists of a YOUNG COUPLE. It locks into place with a CLICK. He steps down from the small platform and engages a large metal lever. The wheel CREAKS and begins to spin.

He stands stolidly, watching the spinning wheel for a moment, then checks the time on a cheap wristwatch.



INT/EXT. JUNGLE OF LOVE - DAY

Jack and Betsy sit close in a small boat on an artificial river of black-green water. Tropical vegetation grows in flower beds on either side, backed by concrete walls painted with jungle scenes.

BETSY

Gosh, it's nice out today. You know, when I got off work this morning all I wanted to do was sleep. But now i don't feel tired at all.

She stretches out on the boat's bench seat, relaxing.

BETSY (CONT'D)

I feel good. Isn't that weird?

JACK

Weird but good. Me too. I mean I feel good.

BETSY

What, you're not weird?

JACK

Well, I suppose I might be that too.

BETSY

Oh, you are. I'm sure of it.

They float into a dark, cavernous tunnel. Artificial LIGHTNING FLASHES, revealing animatronic jungle-themed tableaux. Peals of artificial THUNDER roll, mixed with the

sound of FALLING RAIN and EXOTIC BIRDS CALLS. Jets of MIST BLAST out occasionally.

FLASH! An oversized plaster CROCODILE thrashes from side to side. It's gaping maw opens and closes.

FLASH! A TOUCAN swivels its mechanical head and stares dramatically at the passing boat, then snaps back.

FLASH! A huge TIGER rears up, ready to strike with its powerful claws.

Betsy resists the urge to scream. Jack smiles. Suddenly, a pneumatically controlled GIANT ANACONDA strikes near Betsy's face. She recoils instinctively, letting out a scream, and grabs onto Jack's arm.

She chuckles nervously and smiles, loosing her grip on his arm, but not letting go. They laugh as the boat emerges into daylight, revealing a sign above the rounded tunnel exit that reads 'JUNGLE OF LOVE'.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

Samantha sits alone on a park bench facing the Wheel Of Life. To one side, gleeful riders scream on a Swing Ride called The Western Swing.

She pulls the black notebook from her backpack, then unzips a pocket and pulls out a pen - the VINTAGE FOUNTAIN PEN that had been on Principal Gifford's desk. She observes the people on the Midway and scribbles occasionally in her book.

A group of PRETTY GIRLS takes a selfie together. Each one makes the same pouty 'selfie face'.

A miserable looking MAN IN A BEAR SUIT, minus the head, sits smoking. The oversized, cartoonish head of the costume smiles on the bench beside him.

The RED-HEADED BOY with the water pistol runs up and stops, pointing the plastic gun at Samantha. He smiles a mischievous, gap-toothed smile.

ANGRY MAN (O.S.)

Zachary! You get your ass over here or we are going home! I swear to GOD!

The boy runs away. She focuses into the distance. The Carny is standing at the controls of the Wheel Of Life. He turns. He sees Samantha watching him. He smiles a long, thin smile. She is frozen, staring in fascination.

VOICE (O.S.)

Boo!

She jumps a little and turns around to see Roy and Suzi standing behind her. Roy has tapped her on one shoulder and shouted into her opposite ear. Roy lets out a hearty laugh and spins in place.

ROY (CONT'D)

Oh man, you should have seen your face.

Samantha is not amused. She closes the notebook, shoves it into her backpack, and storms away.

SUZI (O.S.)

Oh come on sweetie, don't be a spoil sport.

Samantha keeps up her brisk pace, not looking back. Suzi

looks a little sad and frustrated.

SUZI (CONT'D)

Me and Roy were gonna take you  
on the Ferris wheel.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

The parking lot is filled with POLICE CRUISERS and other official vehicles. Crime scene tape spans the broken glass doors.

The STORE OWNER talks to two uniformed OFFICERS outside. Through the ragged hole in the building two DETECTIVES can be seen. They stand over a bloody white sheet, the remains of the murdered customer. Blood is pooled on the floor, commingling with broken glass.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

Billy, Half-Shaved Head Girl and another COHORT are walking the semi-circle of AMUSEMENT RIDES that encompasses the Midway.

HALF-SHAVED HEAD GIRL

Man, you should have seen your  
face! I thought you were going  
to shit a brick. Or something.

BILLY

I told you to shut the fuck up  
with that shit.

COHORT

Hey, lay off her Billy. She told  
you that chick was dangerous.

BILLY

*I'm dangerous. And if you want to find out just how dangerous I am, keep pushing me.*

COHORT

OK, OK. Calm down.

BILLY

Don't tell me to calm down.

Angrier than ever, Billy waves them off and strides ahead.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Just leave me alone, OK.

His sidekicks look at each other and roll their eyes. The Cohort turns to walk and Half-Shaved Head Girl trips up his foot from behind.

INT. SECURITY ROOM 01 - DAY

Larsson and Moretti enter the park's security staff room where Curly sits behind a large desk. Delphina sits in a chair nearby. Curly's jacket is off, clearly showing the gun in his shoulder holster.

CURLY

What the hell took you so long?

MORETTI

We were way down by the zoo.  
What's going on?

CURLY

I got a call from the police.

Some asshole shot up the Circle  
A on Torrance. Took out the  
clerk and a customer and got  
away.

LARSSON

So what? Sounds like a robbery  
gone wrong to me.

Curly looks at Larsson like he wants to shoot him.

CURLY

He didn't take anything! In  
fact they think he paid.

MORETTI

He paid? That's some fucked up  
shit.

CURLY

Shut the fuck up Moretti!  
I said they think he paid.  
They don't know. But it looks  
like we might have a psycho  
on the loose.

DELPHINA

You think it's time to bust out  
the guns, Curly?

CURLY

Shut the fuck up, Delphina! I  
told you never to call me that.

DELPHINA

Sorry Curl-, I mean, sorry boss.  
Um, Mr. Simms.

LARSSON

(to Curly)

Hey, how come you get to carry  
a gun and we never get to carry  
a gun? Even the night guy carries  
a gun. And we never get to.  
Carry a gun.

CURLY

First of all, Larsson, you're not me.  
And second of all, Shut the fuck  
up, Larsson!

(to all)

Just keep your eyes peeled, OK?

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

Another RIDE OPERATOR approaches The Carny, eyeing him  
suspectly. You can sense the unease with which he regards  
the strange and dangerous looking man in black.

RIDE OPERATOR

They told me to spell you for  
lunch.

The Carny looks *through* his fellow employee. He nods  
almost imperceptibly and walks away.

INT. EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM - DAY

The Carny walks slowly into the room and retrieves his bag  
lunch from the employee refrigerator.

EXT. EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM - DAY

The Carny exits, carrying the paper bag, and purchases a  
soda from a nearby vending machine.

EXT. FAIRGROUND - DAY

Betsy and Jack stroll the fairgrounds. She munches on rainbow-colored cotton candy. He carries a bag of unshelled peanuts, deftly cracking and eating them with one hand.

BETSY

Me? Nope, no kids. I suppose at one time I wanted children, but the timing never seemed to be right. Maybe the right guy just never came along.

Betsy watches as a group of SCHOOL CHILDREN on a field trip pass by, escorted front and back by TWO TEACHERS. All wear the same color t-shirt for ease of identification.

BETSY (CON'T)

What about you?

JACK

Oh, uh. Yeah, two. A boy and a girl. Both grown. My son is a cop in Wisconsin. He's married with a kid of his own. My daughter's in graduate school.

BETSY

They sound like great kids. You must be proud.

JACK

I am. Very proud. After their mom died it was hard for all of us. I think they helped me more than I helped them.



Betsy takes hold of his arm. She spots a shooting gallery up ahead.

BETSY

Hey, let's play a game!  
(indicates the booth)  
I bet you're a crackerjack shot.

JACK

I don't know. I'd hate to disappoint you. I'm pretty rusty.

BETSY

Aw, c'mon. Give it a try.

EXT. SITTING DUCK'S SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

PING! A metal cut-out of a duck moving along a small conveyor belt goes down. Ping, ping, ping! Three more in line fall.

A small crowd has gathered around Jack. A sign atop the plywood booth reads 'SITTING DUCK'S SHOOTING RANGE'. The backdrop is painted with various scenes of ponds and fields. All the spaces that would have held ducks are now empty.

He sets the gun down and the CROWD APPLAUDS. The GALLERY OPERATOR (60's), an old west looking character, regards him with a look of genuine admiration.

GALLERY OPERATOR

Well sir, that was the most impressive display of pea shootin' I've seen around here in quite some time. Far as I'm concerned you can take any prize you want.

Jack gives Betsy a long look.

JACK

What do you think?

For a moment she is speechless.

GALLERY OPERATOR (O.S.)

Anything on the wall, ma'am.

She points to the largest stuffed animal in the booth, a giant Pink Panther doll about as tall as she is.

JACK

You sure you want to lug that guy  
around with you the rest of the day?

BETSY

I'm sure.

The operator grabs a hook and pulls the oversized plush down from the wall. He hands it to Jack, who gives it to Betsy. She hugs it to her with one arm and squeezes Jack with the other. She gives him a peck on the cheek.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

The Carny sits on a bench flanked by two large planters. It is the same bench Samantha was sitting on earlier. He chews the sandwich and washes it down with the soda. He takes his time, watching the throngs of people as they pass.

A YOUNG WOMAN and a YOUNG MAN share a loving kiss.

TWO TOUGH DUDES with handlebar mustaches pass. They also stop and kiss.

A SMALL CHILD chases a butterfly into a flower bed and is pulled out by his MOTHER.

A very OLD WOMAN pushes an even OLDER MAN in a wheelchair.

INT. SECURITY ROOM 01 - DAY

Curly and his staff rise from their chairs. Curly puts his jacket back on, concealing the holstered gun.

CURLY

Be sharp, men. We don't know  
if that freak is out there, but  
if he is. . . it could be anybody.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

The Carny eats the last bite of his sandwich. He downs the remaining soda and crushes the can, placing it inside the paper bag.

He walks calmly to a trash can and throws the bag in, then strides to the edge of a wooded area near the Ferris wheel.

A metal barricade runs along the outside of the woods with a sign that reads: 'PARK PERSONNEL ONLY - NO ADMITTANCE'. He moves a section of the barricade just enough to slip into the woods.

EXT. SECURITY BUILDING 01 - DAY

Delphina, Larsson and Moretti exit the building and disperse in different directions. Only Curly remains on the platform, looking out over the

MIDWAY

where riders scream with glee on the Tilt-A-Whirl and twirl

through the air on the Pendulum ride.

INT. BUMPER CAR PAVILION - DAY

Riders speed their bumper cars here and there, a helter-skelter of buffeting movement.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

Passengers on a Round-Up ride are pushed against its circular encompassing wall by centrifugal force. They scream with pleasure as the floor drops out beneath them. Mechanical arms move, tilting the ride on its axis.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Jack and Betsy are seated in a gondola on the Ferris wheel. The giant stuffed Pink Panther sits to one side of Betsy, causing her to sit closer to Jack. The RIDE OPERATOR lowers their lap bar. It snaps in place with a CLICK.

BETSY

I can't believe I let you talk  
me into this.

JACK

I can be quite persuasive.

BETSY

(laughing)

I'm so afraid of heights.

JACK

If you get scared just grab  
on to me.

Betsy winks knowingly.

BETSY

What a noble gesture.

They break into laughter as their gondola moves up until the next one is even with the platform, then stops.

Suzi and Roy enter the next gondola, also laughing. They have passed the outskirts of Topsyville and are on their way to Wastedland.

ROY

Move over, woman.

She scoots over and the attendant clicks their lap bar into place. Their gondola moves up a bit and stops. Suzi pulls a bottle from her purse, takes a swig and passes it to Roy.

SUZI

God, it's nice out.

ROY

Yeah, it's a nice day. I might even let you give me a hand job when we get up there.

SUZI

Oh Roy, you're such a charmer.

The next gondola is loaded and the wheel notches up again.

EXT. SECURITY BUILDING 01- DAY

Curly is on the porch of Security Building 01, eyeing the crowd with suspicion. Security Building 02 - where the guns are kept - stands nearby.

Curly glances at its padlocked door, then his eyes move to

a small gap between two sections of metal barricade near the edge of the woods.

INT. ARCADE - DAY

Samantha plays a vintage game machine in a darkened arcade. She plays with great concentration, skillfully destroying hordes of attacking aliens. A cacophony of BEEPS and ELECTRONIC EXPLOSIONS fills the air. Nearby, an open doorway lets in light from the Midway.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Through trees The Carny is visible, hunched over a hole in the ground the size of a small shallow grave. A piece of plywood lies nearby next to a pile of brush. His arms move slightly as his unseen hands perform some task.

LEAVES CRUNCH as footsteps move closer.

VOICE (O.S)

Hey you! What the hell are you doing? This area is off limits.

Curly stands looking at the back of The Carny, who does not turn around.

CURLY (CONT'D)

Hey, I'm talking to you!

The Carny slowly turns around. He is pointing a pistol with a long silencer at Curly.

CURLY (CONT'D)

Fuck.

The Carny smiles his long smile, then fires. A low THOOMP.

Blood pours from a round hole in the center of Curly's forehead. He drops forward with a THUD, landing on his stomach.

The Carny pulls a complex-looking scoped rifle with a strap from the hole and slings it onto his back. He walks calmly to Curly's lifeless body and looks down upon it briefly, then steps over and walks to the

#### EDGE OF THE WOODS

where he stands, looking out on the fairground. He pulls aside a section of the metal barricade for a clearer view of

#### THE MIDWAY

where PARK GOERS stroll and RIDERS scream their screams of joy, having a good time on a crisp fall day at the fair.

#### EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

The lap bar comes down on AN OLDER COUPLE. The Ride Operator steps from the platform and engages a clamp-like device at the top of the waist-high lever. The wheel begins to spin.

Betsy grips Jack's arm as they move smoothly toward the ground and sweep around to begin their ascent toward the top.

The rifle's

#### SCOPE VIEW

moves here and there, occasionally lands on a rider for a moment, then moves away.

The Carny stands motionless at the

EDGE OF THE WOODS.

Curly's body lies face down a short distance behind him. A breeze moves through the canopy, scattering leaves. The

SCOPE VIEW

moves to the Ferris wheel Operator, who leans idly against the platform checking his watch. It fixes on him, steadying.

INT. ARCADE - DAY

Samantha is still playing the arcade game. Enemies swirl ever faster on the screen as she deftly fires, then dodges to safety.

The sound of a DISTANT GUNSHOT breaks her concentration. Her pixellated spaceship explodes. She turns from the game toward the source of the sound, listening intently.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Jack and Betsy have heard the sound and look concerned.

BETSY

What was that? Was it a gunshot?

JACK

I don't know.

Suzi and Roy also hear the sound. Her hand stops moving in his lap. A stick of beef jerky hangs from the corner of Roy's mouth.



ROY

That sounded like a gun shot.

SUZI

Probably just a firecracker.

SCOPE VIEW

on the Ferris wheel Operator as blood spurts from his chest and he falls, motionless, onto the paved stones of the Midway.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

Billy has heard the shot and dives behind one of the large planters that sits on either side of a nearby bench. He sees the body of the Ride Operator lying motionless on the ground. A pool of blood is growing, filling the gaps between the stones.

BILLY

What the fuck?

EXT. FAIRGROUND/ZOO AREA - DAY

Delphina stops, listening. He pulls the walkie-talkie from his belt.

DELPHINA

(into walkie-talkie)

Curl- Mr. Simms, you got 'em on?

He disengages the button and waits for an answer.

DELPHINA

(into walkie-talkie)

Mr. Simms, come in.

Waits again.

VOICE (O.S.)  
(through walkie-talkie)  
Delphina, this is Larsson.  
That sounded like a gunshot.

DELPHINA  
(into walkie-talkie)  
I know. Where are you?

EXT. NEAR THE SHOOTING GALLERY - DAY

Larsson jogs through the crowd, most of whom go about their business, unconcerned. A few stop, listening.

LARSSON  
(into walkie-talkie)  
I'm headed back to base. Why  
Isn't Curly answering? We need  
guns and he's got the only key.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/ZOO AREA - DAY

Delphina picks up his pace, heading back toward the security buildings.

DELPHINA  
(into walkie-talkie)  
I don't know. Moretti, you  
listening to this?

MORETTI (O.S.)  
(through walkie-talkie)  
Yeah. I'm back at base.

EXT. SECURITY AREA - DAY

Moretti stands at the corner of the security building. The body of the ride operator lies motionless in the distance. A small crowd gathers around.

RANDOM PERSON  
(faint, in distance)  
Hey Mr., you ok?

ANOTHER RANDOM PERSON  
(faint, in distance)  
Maybe he had a heart attack.

MORETTI  
(into walkie-talkie)  
We're gonna need guns.

SCOPE VIEW

moves from the fallen body of the Ride Operator to The Western Swing Ride. It finds a YOUNG BLONDE WOMAN and follows her several times around as she circles, hanging onto the chains of the swing. Her long hair flows out behind.

INT. ARCADE - DAY

Samantha, listening through the din of the machines, hears a SHOT ring out. She flinches slightly and moves toward the door of the arcade.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

The blonde woman on the swing ride goes limp, letting go of the chains. Her slack body circles, around and around.

The crowd, seeing the fallen attendant and hearing the

second shot begins to panic and runs in every direction. They bounce around like bumper cars. Some fall and are trampled beneath the feet of the pushing masses. A woman cries into her cellphone as she takes shelter in a doorway.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Betsy and Jack are alert now, at attention in the gondola's bench seat. They see the crowds below rushing away from the Midway.

Roy and Suzi are suddenly stone cold sober.

ROY

That was definitely a gunshot.  
Somebody's shootin' out here.

Roy zips up and begins to struggle with the metal lap bar. It's tight against his thighs. He looks down to see the rushing crowd and the fallen Ride Operator, then tugs at the bar with all his might.

Jack and Betsy are also trying to free themselves. Their gondola is nearing the top of the wheel's rotation.

JACK

Help me push the bar up. Let's  
try to break it free.

BETSY

OK.

They push their legs against the bar and pull on it with their arms, but to no avail. Jack reaches for the locking pin and tries to remove it. He jiggles the bar and tries again, but it won't budge.

EXT. THE WESTERN SWING - DAY

A RIDER on the swing ride sees the blonde woman's body hanging limp in the swing in front of him. Drops of blood lick from her hair and spatter onto his face. Through bloody eyes he stares down in horror at the chaos below.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

BAM! BAM! Two more shots ring out and two people in the crowd fall. The chaos increases as everyone begins rushing for the park entrance.

The OPERATOR of the Western Swing stops the ride and engages the mechanism to lower the riders, then makes a run for it. The swing slows down as the riders descend toward the ground.

The ROUND-UP RIDE OPERATOR moves to his controls to stop it. A SHOT rings out, pinging off a nearby piece of metal. He runs away, leaving the passengers helplessly spinning, pressed to the wall.

EXT. ARCADE - DAY

Samantha peers out from the door of the arcade, blinking as her eyes adjust to the light. Everyone stands still, looking in the direction of the shots.

Suddenly a stream of people pours around a corner in the distance, running frantically toward her.

EXT. FAIRGROUND - DAY

Samantha runs upstream, against the rushing force of the crowd, toward the Ferris wheel.

SCOPE VIEW

moves back to the Ferris wheel and follows a young couple as their gondola moves slowly down. They are looking around and pulling at the lap bar. The scope moves first to her, then to him, then back to her.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

BAM! The shot catches the man in the center of his chest, killing him instantly. BAM! The young woman joins her boyfriend in eternity.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY

Samantha pushes her way through the oncoming crowd of panicked fairgoers. She ducks and dodges them like the aliens in her video game.

BAM!. . . BAM!. . . BAM! Three more shots echo through the park.

She loses her footing and falls as the crowd rushes forward. Cat-like, she jumps to her feet, narrowly escaping being trampled.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

The crowd grows thinner as she nears the Midway. She runs toward the Ferris wheel, but sees a woman cut down directly in front of her as another SHOT rings out.

She dives behind a planter, then peers out. She sees the red-headed boy lying face down in a pool of blood, the water pistol still in his hand.

Further away she recognizes the Ferris wheel attendant lying motionless on the ground. The gravity of the

situation starts to sink in. She searches the gondolas with her eyes, frantically looking for her mother.

Another BLAST explodes forth and a bullet PINGS off a paving stone nearby. She ducks for cover and looks to one side. She does a double take. Billy is crouched behind the planter on the opposite side of the bench. He looks over, slowly recognizing her.

BILLY

Perfect.

SAMANTHA

Hey, you're just who i was  
hoping to see too.

Samantha searches the wheel again and her eyes land on Suzi. More SHOTS ring out and Samantha and Billy move closer together, seeking shelter behind their respective planters.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

As the wheel descends, Jack searches the woodline for the shooter. He notices the displaced section of barricade.

They reach the platform and Betsy sees the bloodied Ride Operator. *He looks back at her. He is severely wounded, but not dead.* He tries to pull himself along the ground with one hand but collapses, again motionless. She tugs at Jack's sleeve.

BETSY

I don't think this thing's  
going to stop.

They both struggle with the lap bar as they begin another ascent.

EXT. EDGE OF THE WOODS - DAY

The Carny stands impassive with the gun held waist high. He raises it slowly to his shoulder and takes aim.

SCOPE VIEW

falls on Suzi, who is still struggling with her lap bar. BAM! She is hit in the chest.

EXT. PLANTERS - DAY

Samantha sees her mother shot and bolts upright, leaving her cover.

SAMANTHA

Mom! No!

A bullet strikes the planter in front of her, shattering its lip. She ducks down again, resisting the urge to sob. Billy looks at her, feeling her grief and sensing her rising anger. He watches, understanding, as she shrugs the backpack off her shoulders and lets it drop.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Roy freaks out and flails at the lap bar as the gondola begins to rise away from the platform.

ROY

Holy fuckin' shit! Jesus!  
Suzi, are you OK?

BAM! BAM! Two more shots ring out as the passengers in the gondola in front of them slump into their seats.



SUZI

No I'm not OK you fucking moron!  
That son-of-a-bitch shot me!

ROY

Now, just 'cause you're wounded,  
woman, don't give you the right  
to talk to me like that.

SUZI

Give me that.

She grabs the bottle from his hand with her good arm,  
wincing in pain. She pours a little onto her wound and a  
lot into her mouth.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

The Western Swing Ride has fully descended. Its riders  
free themselves from their restraints and run away. The  
blonde girl hangs limp in her swing. Her lifeless feet  
just touch the ground.

The other rides have been stopped and people are unbuckling  
themselves, preparing to escape. All except the Round-Up  
Ride, which still spins. Some of its riders reach out to  
hold hands with nearby loved ones or strangers.

The bodies of the two slain lovers on the Ferris wheel sit  
slumped together.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Jack tries to free the pin to the lap bar again, but it is  
still stuck. He reaches into his jacket, pulls out the  
pistol and uses its grip as a hammer to strike at the pin.

Betsy is surprised to see that he is armed. On the second

hit the pin breaks and the bar is loose. They are on the backside of the wheel, heading for the top.

SCOPE VIEW

zooms on another Ferris wheel gondola. Finds an older couple. BAM!. . .BAM! Moves on to someone riding alone. BAM! On the

EDGE OF THE WOODS

The Carny calmly ejects the spent clip and shoves in another. He shows no emotion as he puts the scope to his eye and fires. Resets and fires again. Wipes sweat from his eye and fires again.

EXT. PLANTERS - DAY

Samantha and Billy see the wounded Ride Operator dragging himself up the steps of the platform. He gets to the lever and tries to reach the grip at its top, but cannot reach high enough and falls back, wiping his blood down the bottom half of the lever.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

First one, then several more uniformed POLICE OFFICERS run outside and get in their patrol cars. Two plain clothes DETECTIVES and an AMBULANCE DRIVER also run out and get in their vehicles.

Two cop cars collide as all the cars scramble to get out of the parking lot and onto the street. They race away, leaving only one police cruiser in the lot.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/SECURITY BUILDINGS - DAY

Delphina and Moretti are between the two security buildings. Larsson runs up carrying a set of bolt cutters. Delphina takes them from him.

DELPHINA

Stay here while I get those locks  
off. Wait 'til I give the word.

Another SHOT is fired as Delphina runs for the security room door. He climbs the stairs and quickly cuts the first lock. It falls with a CLANG.

Moretti and Larsson watch as he cuts the second lock and the door swings open.

DELPHINA (CONT'D)

Alright guys, come aaagh!

Delphina falls, revealing a bullet hole in the door behind him.

MORETTI

(to Larsson)

Let's go!

They sprint for the door and mount the stairs, leaping over Delphina's lifeless form. Moretti reaches back out and grabs him by the shoulders. He drags him inside and reaches back out for the bolt cutter just as another hole is punched through the door just above his head. He grabs the bolt cutter and ducks back inside, pulling the door shut.

INT. SECURITY ROOM 02 - DAY

They are breathing heavily as the volley of bullets

continues outside. Moretti is cutting the padlock from the locker that holds the weapons.

Suddenly the wall of security monitors EXPLODES as bullets penetrate the side of the building. Larsson and Moretti dive onto the floor as glass sprays over everything.

SCOPE VIEW

falls on a Ferris wheel rider, who struggles to free himself.

A SHOT rings out, but the man is not hit. The wheel has stopped turning. The SCOPE moves to the control lever, where *the ride attendant is propped up, smiling*. BAM! He goes down, this time for real.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Roy worms free of the lap bar, kicking Suzi's wounded shoulder in the process. She is weakening from the loss of blood.

SUZI

Ow! What the hell's wrong  
with you?

The gondola rocks back and forth from Roy's thrashing movement, then settles. He begins to climb out.

ROY

I'm going to get help, OK  
baby? Everything's gonna be  
fine, you'll see.

SUZI

Roy, do not leave me here alone!

ROY  
(climbing out of  
the gondola)  
I'm going to get help. I'll  
be right back.

Suzi screams at the top of her lungs.

SUZI  
FUCK YOU, ROY!

Roy's head pops back up for a second.

ROY  
Watch that mouth.

He disappears and begins climbing down the metal beams of  
the Ferris wheel.

Jack and Betsy see him climbing out onto the wheel.

JACK  
What the hell are you doing?

ROY  
What?

JACK  
You're gonna get yourself killed.

ROY  
What?

Roy can't hear Jack, or pretends he can't hear him, through  
the mechanical CREAKING of the wheel and the din of  
GUNSHOTS. He continues climbing down.

EXT. PLANTERS - DAY

Samantha sees Roy climb out onto the wheel.

SAMANTHA

That son of a bitch.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - DAY

Larsson rises and looks out the window of the security room. He sees that the wheel has stopped. He sees a man climbing on the outside of the ride, making his way down from the top.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Roy climbs down the wheel briskly, mumbling incomprehensibly to himself.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - DAY

BAM! A shot echoes and the man falls like a rag doll. His body hits the ground with a SPLAT as Larsson turns his head away.

EXT. PLANTERS - DAY

Samantha looks away, horrified by the sight of Roy's plummeting death.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - DAY

Moretti has gotten in to the locker. He grabs a high-tech rifle, a pistol and several magazines of ammunition. He clips a long magazine into the rifle and a smaller one into the pistol.

MORETTI

Damn! There's only one rifle and one pistol in here.

LARSSON

We'll have to make do. You take the rifle. I'll take the pistol.

MORETTI

Are you sure? We can draw straws or do rock paper scissors or something.

LARSSON

No time.

Moretti hands Larsson the Glock and two extra magazines of ammunition. Larsson cocks the pistol.

MORETTI

Hey Larsson. In case we don't make it I just want to say, it's been good working with you.

LARSSON

Likewise. Now let's go get that bastard!

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Jack and Betsy are horrified, having seen Roy fall to his death from the top of the wheel. Betsy clings to him. More SHOTS reverberate in the cool air.

JACK

I think I know where he is, but I can't get a shot from here.

I'll have to go out.

BETSY

No, Jack! Don't go out there!

JACK

I have to. I'll be OK. Promise.

BETSY

Oh God. OK.

She cries and gives him a long hug.

BETSY (CONT'D)

Please be careful, Jack. I  
don't want to lose you.

He fixes her with a sincere look.

JACK

You won't.

He opens the revolver and checks the cylinder. Six  
bullets. He shoves the gun inside his jacket and climbs  
out of the gondola.

SCOPE VIEW

moves away from the wheel just as Jack is climbing out.  
The passengers in the gondolas facing the woods are all  
dead, slumped in their seats. Blood trickles onto their  
bodies from above.

The Carny lowers the rifle and straps it onto his back. He  
pulls out the pistol and moves along the edge of the woods,  
behind the barricade.



EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE — DAY

Suzi is alone in her gondola, motionless, soaked in blood. She looks out at the blue October sky.

Suzi  
Some nice day.

Betsy looks down, watching Jack's progress. She sees Suzi lying wounded in the gondola below hers. Suzi and Betsy lock eyes.

BETSY  
Can you hear me? You have to  
stay awake! Can you move your  
arms?

Suzi replies by lifting the bottle to her lips with her good arm.

BETSY (CONT'D)  
Good.

Suzi starts to nod off, losing consciousness.

BETSY (CONT'D)  
Don't go to sleep! You have to  
stay awake! Do you hear me?

Betsy looks over the edge. She sees that Jack is still on the wheel, carefully making his way down. She looks back down at Suzi, who is fading fast.

She climbs from her gondola, which sways as she tries to get her footing on the beams.

EXT. EDGE OF THE WOODS - DAY

The Carny walks briskly along the edge of the woods. When he gets near the security building he pushes aside the metal barrier and steps out.

EXT. PLANTERS - DAY

Samantha and Billy are in their hiding places. They see the gunman step out from the edge of the woods.

To Samantha's left the Angry Man runs up and kneels over the body of the Red-Headed Boy, his son. His face turns the same crimson as his oversized t-shirt. He looks up and sees the gunman standing in the distance. His hands form into fists.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Jack is making his way along the outside of the wheel. Other people are also trying to climb down. A woman loses her grip and falls. He looks up and is startled to see Betsy far above, climbing down.

Jack gets a view of the gunman through the metal beams of the wheel and draws a bead.

Betsy is climbing slowly down the short distance to Suzi's gondola. Her foot slips and she looks down, watching one of her sensible shoes flip and tumble to the ground. She looks way, closes her eyes and clings onto the wheel for a moment.

She reaches the gondola and climbs in. She shakes Suzi, but there is no response. She pulls the vodka bottle from Suzi's hand. Suzi comes to, moaning weakly.

SUZI

Roy, is that you? You son-of-a-bitch.

She reaches out for the bottle in Betsy's hand, missing it.

SUZI (CONT'D)

You came back for me.

Betsy pulls aside the bloody jacket and shirt, exposing the wound on Suzi's upper chest. She reacts, realizing how badly the woman is hurt. She pours vodka over the bleeding hole and Suzi lets out a miserable scream.

BETSY

Ma'am. What's your name?

SUZI

That's a silly question.

BETSY

What's your name, ma'am.  
Tell me!

SUZI

You know me, I'm Suzi.

BETSY

Suzi. Good. Stay with me Suzi.

Suzi reaches out for the bottle and Betsy hands it to her. Betsy takes off her jacket and begins tying it around Suzi's shoulder to staunch the bleeding.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS/PARKING LOT - DAY

The POLICE speed into the lot, LIGHTS flashing and SIRENS blaring. Panicked drivers are coming out of the lot. They

make risky moves. A police cruiser is hit and skids to a stop. The police dodge the oncoming cars and pedestrians and make their way to the

TURNSTILES

where people are still streaming out. They try to run in, but it's tough going. The wounded and the dead are being carried out.

Some of the arriving police assist the PARAMEDICS. Others question nearby citizens, trying to gather information.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

The Angry Man stands up and bellows with every ounce of anger in his angry soul:

ANGRY MAN  
YOU KILLED MY BOY!

and charges like a rhinoceros on PCP, running as fast as his stocky body will carry him. He gets about half way to the smiling Carny before the SHOT rings out.

He stands like a statue, clutching his heart, then drops straight to the ground. Just then

DELPHINA AND MORETTI

burst from the security room and level their guns on The Carny, who stands with one side to them, facing the Angry Man's fallen form.

MORETTI  
Alright, freeze scumbag!

LARSSON

We got your ass! Put the  
guns down! Now!

The Carny turns to them, still smiling. His gun sweeps a path until it is almost pointing at them.

BAM, BAM, BAM! BAM! BAM! They OPEN FIRE on him.

The Carny's pistol finishes its arc. It points at Larsson, who looks confused.

LARSSON

You.

THOOMP! Larsson falls dead.

Moretti looks dumbfounded, then slowly realizes. The Carny waits a moment for it to hit Moretti that *their bullets have been switched for blanks*.

THOOMP! A silenced blast knocks Moretti from the platform. He's dead before he hits the ground.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Betsy sees the security guards cut down. She looks over the other side of the gondola and sees Jack far below, trying to get a shot at The Carny.

SUZI is slumped on the bench, the empty bottle has fallen from her hand.

BETSY

Hey! Hey!

She SLAPS Suzi across the face. No response. She slaps harder and Suzi stirs and speaks weakly.

SUZI

I told you never hit me again,  
Roy.

BETSY

That's better. Hang on. You're  
going to be OK.

But Betsy's look says "She's not."

SUZI

Isss ok. Roy's come back for me.

EXT. LOWER ON THE WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Jack gets an angle on The Carny and FIRES. The Carny spins  
around - hit in the shoulder - and stumbles to the ground.

Behind the planter, Samantha sees The Carny fall. She  
makes a run for the wheel. She is about half way there  
when The Carny stumbles to his feet. He levels the gun at  
her.

Billy stands up and screams:

BILLY

Hey fuckbreath! Why don't you  
pick on someone your own size!

and runs from his cover behind the planter.

The wounded Carny turns and fires a SHOT, which narrowly  
misses, PINGING off the pavement nearby. Billy takes cover  
behind another planter. He peeks out to see that Samantha  
has made it to the wheel. She begins to climb as *The Carny*  
*again turns his gun on her.*

Billy peeks up from behind the planter and shouts:

BILLY (CONT'D)

That was pathetic! I thought  
you were some kind of tough  
guy.

He ducks as a bullet whizzes overhead, striking the wall  
behind him.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Samantha is on the wheel, climbing. She pauses and looks  
down with concern to where Billy crouches behind the  
planter. Steeling herself, she looks away and continues  
climbing.

EXT. MIDWAY/PLANTER - DAY

Behind the planter, Billy readies himself, then calls out:

BILLY (CONT'D)

Alright Mr. Psychofuck, catch me  
if you can!

and runs and slides baseball-style behind another planter.  
The Carny's bullet strikes a ride sign, obliterating a  
lightbulb.

Billy takes a deep breath and brings up all the courage he  
has left.

BILLY (CONT'D)

You'll have to do better than  
that! I'm Billy Baadaaasssss!

He makes a run for another of the oversized flower pots and

dives for cover as it EXPLODES, sending pottery shards and dirt flying. He hides behind what's left of the planter, breathing a sigh of relief.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

Samantha climbs far above the Midway. Blood drips onto her from above and makes the metal surfaces slippery. She loses her grip with one hand, but holds on with the other and continues on.

Jack takes aim between two beams. His finger slowly squeezes on the trigger. But before he can get a shot off The Carny moves out of view.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

The Carny walks swiftly to the lever, pulls it back and clicks the handle into place. The Wheel Of Life creaks and begins to move.

The Carny runs back into the woods as a bullet PINGS off the metal barricade.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE - DAY

As the wheel begins to rotate, Jack loses his footing and falls a short distance. He catches a beam and pulls himself back onto the ride.

Betsy loses her footing, nearly falling out of the gondola. She pulls herself up and looks over the side. Samantha is climbing toward her. She extends a hand and pulls the girl in.

Suzi stirs a little, still held in by the lap bar. She looks pale and she's drenched with blood. She smiles, recognizing her daughter.



SUZI

You came back for me.

Samantha holds her mother. Suzi reaches up with a hand to stroke Samantha's face.

SUZI (CONT'D)

I'm sorry baby. I know I was a shitty mother. I didn't mean to be. It just sort of came out that way.

She begins to go limp. The lights are fading.

SAMANTHA

No! Don't you fucking leave me!

SUZI

Watch. . .that. . .mouth.

Suzi slumps to the side. Samantha sobs and hugs her mother's lifeless, bloody body. Betsy puts her hand on Samantha's shoulder. The two lock eyes. Samantha falls into Betsy's arms, sobbing.

The Pink Panther doll sits alone in its gondola, slowly descending.

IN THE WOODS

The Carny finds a new position and aims between the vertical bars of the barrier.

Scope View

finds a WOMAN IN BUSINESS CLOTHING climbing down the wheel. He FIRES and she drops. He moves to an OLDER MAN who has

just reached the ground. The man runs. BAM! He drops.

The SCOPE VIEW moves back up the wheel and finds Jack between the beams. BAM! Jack ducks away as the bullet takes a chunk from the edge of the steel beam.

Only the slightest sign of annoyance shows on The Carny's face. He shoves the section of metal fencing aside and SHOOTS the rifle in short BURSTS, like a machine gun.

BAM!BAM!BAM!BAM!BAM!BAM! He bounces the stock from his good shoulder, causing the gun to fire rapidly. He is aiming at the descending gondolas of the Ferris wheel.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE/GONDOLA - DAY

TWO YOUNG WOMEN huddle in the lower portion of a gondola, out of sight. They have somehow managed to break free from their lap bar.

Another round of RAPID FIRE and bullets pierce the red painted metal of one of the carriages, leaving jagged, round holes.

BAM!BAM!BAM! Holes appear in the blue metal of another gondola. A reservoir of blood built up within pours forth from the holes like a grotesque fountain, drenching everything below.

Jack nears the ground. Blood drips down from above. He drops the last few feet, tumbles and finds shelter near the platform.

Dead bodies lie all around at the base of the wheel. CELLPHONES RING, a variety of tones calling out, never to be answered.

Another VOLLEY of shots. Jack spots the fire from the

gunman's barrel. He levels his revolver and pulls the trigger.

EXT. EDGE OF THE WOODS - DAY

A tree inches from The Carny's head is blasted by Jack's bullet, sending bark and splinters into his face.

Temporarily blinded and bleeding from the shoulder, the Carny comes out of the trees and runs away from the Midway down a wide path lined with games and amusements.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

Jack sees him run away and starts to follow, but stops himself and runs back toward the wheel. He spots Betsy peeking out from the gondola, as it descends toward the platform. Samantha's head appears beside Betsy's.

JACK

Get ready to jump off!

He glances back at the fleeing gunman, then turns to run for the platform. Billy stops him, out of breath.

BILLY

I'll make sure they get out.

JACK

OK. Get 'em out of the park.

Jack bolts away in pursuit. Billy runs to the platform and climbs the stairs.

EXT. WHEEL OF LIFE/GONDOLA - DAY

Betsy sees Jack from above as he runs away after The Carny.

BETSY

(shouting)

Jack! Be careful!

Samantha tugs at the lap bar, trying to free her mother's body. It won't budge. Betsy pulls at the pin that releases the bar, but it's caked with rust and won't move.

SAMANTHA

You go. I can't leave her here like this.

BETSY

Don't be silly. We have to get you out of here.

SAMANTHA

It'll be fine. I'll stay here with her until help comes.

Betsy spies the empty liquor bottle on the floor of the gondola. She picks it up and uses the thick part of it to crack the pin loose. The bottle shatters. She pulls the pin, freeing the bar. Samantha lifts it and reaches for her mother's body. Betsy opens the half-door in the side of the gondola.

They pull her dead weight up between them. When they are level with the platform they step out, dragging Suzi's body behind them. Billy is there and helps to support Suzi's head as they lay her out on the platform.

Betsy kicks off the one shoe she is still wearing and runs back down the platform toward the receding gondola.

SAMANTHA

Wait! Where are you going?

BETSY

Forgot something!

Just as she and Jack's original gondola is starting to rise she jumps up and grabs the Pink Panther doll and pulls it down. She looks at Samantha, squeezing the prize and smiles the best smile someone can smile in such a situation.

A PARAMEDIC runs up and sets to work on Suzi, but soon realizes it is too late. The paramedic throws a sheet over the body and moves on to another wounded person. Samantha looks up from her mother's body, tears in her eyes. She peers into the edge of the woods. She spots Curly's tan jacket, which is just visible in the distant underbrush. She runs in that direction.

BILLY

Hey, wait! Where are you going?

He chases after her as she disappears into the tree line. Betsy follows them, barefoot and carrying the Pink Panther.

EXT. FAIRGROUND - DAY

SHOTS ring out up ahead as Jack runs to a corner and stops. He opens his REVOLVER and checks the cylinder. Three bullets left. He slams it closed and peeks around the corner. BAM! Plywood explodes as Jack ducks back. He peeks again to see The Carny recede around a corner.

Jack runs across an open space and shelters on the side of an ICE CREAM SHOP. A woman's lifeless body hangs half-way through its broken plate glass window. Several bloody bodies lie on the sidewalk outside, sprinkled with glass. Terrified people inside huddle together or shelter in makeshift hiding places. The Carny approaches the

## ROUND-UP RIDE

which is still rapidly spinning and tilted toward him. He ejects the magazine and snaps in another.

TWO COPS run around a corner to his left. BAM! He guns one down. The other is taking aim. BAM!. . .BAM! The second cop shoots at the ground as he falls dead.

The riders panic and A CRY rises up when they see The Carny point the gun in their direction. BAM!BAM!BAM!BAM!BAM!BAM! BAM!BAM!BAM! The Carny fires the rifle off his shoulder.

The people are unbloodied on the first pass, but as he continues shooting at the spinning riders their clothes become red with blood. The blood runs and spreads out across the walls of the ride. Pushed by gravity, it flies from the top of the wall and blossoms out, sprinkling in every direction.

Jack, witnessing the horror that is being wrought, rushes from his cover.

JACK

NOOOOOOOOO!

The Carny turns from his gruesome task and spins toward Jack. Jack FIRES, but he is far away. The bullet strikes The Carny's upper thigh.

Jack runs closer for a better shot. The Carny fires his rifle wildly. Bullets ricochet all around, taking out chunks of the paving stone walkway. Jack winces.

The Carny gets up, limps swiftly across the open area and disappears around a corner.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Samantha enters the woods and slows. Curly's body lies peacefully on the leafy ground, face down. Billy stops, surprised by the sight, his eyes still adjusting. Betsy runs up, stops and moves slowly toward the body.

Samantha tries to roll Curly over. He's heavy.

BILLY

What are you doing?

She hefts Curly onto his back and grabs the pistol from his shoulder holster. She runs from the woods in pursuit of The Carny. Billy stalls a second, then runs after her.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Hey, wait! I thought you said  
guns were for pussies.

Samantha runs as fast as her legs will carry her. Billy and Betsy pursue, falling behind.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/ZOO AREA - DAY

Jack ties a ripped sleeve from his jacket around a bloody wound on one arm. He acts quickly. Just enough to stop the bleeding. The revolver is on the ground by the hand of his damaged arm. He reaches across with his other hand and grabs the gun.

He runs through the ZOO area past AGITATED ANIMALS and stops at the corner, leaning against the bars of a CAGE. He peers around to see the Carny limping around a corner in the distance.

A TIGER ROARS and swipes at the bars near Jack's head! He jumps back and exhales as the beast drops down and circles

the cage, GROWLING.

JACK

Don't worry, big fella. You're  
gonna be alright.

Jack inhales and bolts away around the corner as the tiger roars again.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/ICE CREAM SHOP - DAY

Samantha sprints through the Fairground, outpacing the others. She comes to the Ice Cream Shop and pauses, seeing the carnage. Billy and Betsy catch up to her briefly, but there is no time to recover their breath before she races away again.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/GAME BOOTHS - DAY

Jack runs past a row of GAME BOOTHS. The Ring Toss, the High Striker. A Big Six Wheel. Basketball Toss. BAM!BAM! BAM!, shots echo in the distance. He passes SITTIN' DUCKS SHOOTIN' RANGE and rounds the bend.

The Carny is nowhere in sight. A COP lies dead in the open plaza. Jack spots a red scuff mark. A partial footprint, a knocked over chair in the outdoor eating area.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/ROUND-UP RIDE - DAY

Samantha follows the damage path until she comes to Jack's torn jacket. A look of concern, then her eyes raise. She is frozen in place, viewing the horror that is the Round-Up Ride, still spinning and sprinkling blood into the sky. Billy catches up - sees - and runs toward the ride's control panel.

Betsy arrives and tries to catch her breath. She assesses



the situation and we see the saddest look she's ever made.

Billy searches the CONTROL PANEL and flips a switch. The machine begins to slow down and tilt back to parallel with the ground. The people GROAN. Some CRY OUT in pain.

BILLY  
(to Samantha)  
Alright, we've gotta. . .

He turns to her, but she is gone. A woman cries out from the ride:

WOMAN (O.S.)  
Help us!

The tilting wheel circles, rolling on it's edge like a coin that's been tossed, and comes to rest. Betsy looks at Billy. Billy looks at Betsy.

She sets the Pink Panther doll down gently on the ground as the ride's doorway circles once more and stops between them.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/JUNGLE OF LOVE - DAY

The Carny drags himself along and falls among the tropical-style vegetation at the edge of a flowing stream. A small, open boat passes and he watches it as it moves downstream. He is bleeding from his shoulder and his leg, and the pain is now more visible on his face.

Another boat is approaching. He stops it with both hands and pulls himself inside. The black waters pull the boat away down the artificial river.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/GAME BOOTHS - DAY

Samantha runs past the game booths. She passes Sittin' Duck's Shootin' Range and stops, unsure which way to run.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/JUNGLE OF LOVE - DAY

Jack follows the blood signs until he comes to the flower bed. He sees the crushed Croton and Philodendron leaves smeared with blood. A boat goes by and he watches as it passes downstream and under an observation bridge.

EXT. ROUND-UP RIDE - DAY

Betsy and Billy are hard at work in the abattoir that is the interior of the Round-Up Ride. Blood streaks the walls. They move around the circular room, unbuckling the terrified riders' restraining belts.

Once freed, some of the riders bolt for the door, hysterical. Some are wounded and are laid out on the floor. Others are unresponsive, likely dead. A din of MOANING and CRYING is heard all around.

EXT. JUNGLE OF LOVE - DAY

Jack moves along the concrete wall of the Jungle Of Love Ride, revolver in hand. The wall is painted with a tropical mural featuring colorful birds, a panda bear, hippopotami.

He shelters behind an animatronic gorilla. Peeks around and sees a boat moving slowly downstream.

Suddenly The Carny sits up in the boat and levels the rifle at Jack. He FIRES, taking off the top of the gorilla's head as Jack ducks back. Jack peeks out again. The Carny quickly lies back down in the boat, out of sight. Jack watches as the boat enters the cavern-like tunnel.

EXT. FAIRGROUND - DAY

Samantha is running in an area of the park we haven't seen. She has lost the trail. She stops and glances all about. People shelter in doorways, peering out cautiously. Some make a run for it.

THREE COPS appear at a corner and point their GUNS at Samantha.

COP #!  
Freeze! Drop it!

COP #2  
Drop the gun! Get on the ground!

She raises her hands, holding up the gun.

COP #3  
Drop your weapon! Now!

She jumps for a nearby wall as the cops open fire, narrowly missing her. Bullets take chunks out of the brick. The cops chase after her. They get to the corner and peer around, but she is nowhere in sight.

INT. JUNGLE OF LOVE/DARK CAVERN - DAY

Jack moves cautiously in the misty darkness. Artificial LIGHTNING FLASHES, illuminating the TOUCAN, who does his signature head turn. Artificial THUNDER rolls as the cavern returns to darkness.

In another area of the cavern a brief FLASH and we see The Carny's hand reach out of the boat and grab onto an artificial stalagmite that protrudes from the shore. His boat comes to an abrupt stop.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/UNDER A BUILDING - DAY

Samantha is crouched in the darkness under a porch. She watches through a wooden lattice-work as the cops run by and spread out. When they are gone she scrambles out and runs in the opposite direction.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/GAME BOOTHS - DAY

Samantha runs past the game booths and stops again at Sittin' Duck's, where she originally lost the trail. She spots the blood smear and the partial footprint. She checks that the coast is clear and hustles across the plaza, wending her way through the metal outdoor furnishing.

INT. JUNGLE OF LOVE/DARK CAVERN - DAY

All is dark and quiet except for RAIN sounds, low THUNDER and the BUBBLING of the STREAM. Jack is creeping low near the ivy-covered fake rock wall. A NOZZLE HISSES, startling him and sending a fine MIST into his face. He regains his composure and moves on, searching the darkness.

Suddenly to his right a FLASH and the GIANT ANACONDA strikes! He spins and puts a bullet straight down its throat, blowing a hole in the plaster.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/JUNGLE OF LOVE - DAY

Samantha has come to the flower bed with it's crushed foliage. Having heard the shot, she looks in that direction, then looks upstream to see an empty boat approaching. She jumps into it and floats downstream.

EXT. MIDWAY - DAY

The scene is chaotic. LIGHTS FLASH from the emergency vehicles parked by the turnstiles. PARAMEDICS scramble around, attending to the wounded. White sheets cover the bodies of some of the dead. A SWAT TEAM hurries away from the Midway, searching for the killer.

The Wheel Of Life is stopped. Blood streaks its surfaces and pools at its base. A body is removed from the lowest gondola and carried away. A fairground RIDE ATTENDANT has been enlisted and he pulls the lever, sending the next gondola, and its horrors, down for the Paramedics.

EXT. JUNGLE OF LOVE/RIVER - DAY

Samantha hunkers in the boat as it enters the

DARK CAVERN

She grabs a stalagmite and begins to pull herself out of the boat. Just then a FLASH of light reveals a giant, scary-looking plaster spider right in front of her at face level. Startled, she falls back into the boat, hitting her head. The boat continues on downstream.

INT. JUNGLE OF LOVE/DARK CAVERN - DAY

Jack crouches beside a giant plaster frog. A FLASH of light on the other side of the stream illuminates the Carny briefly, but before Jack can take aim he disappears into darkness.

Jack enters the stream of black water up to his chest and begins to wade across. He looks upstream to see a *boat looming over him*. WHAM! It strikes him in the head and he goes under.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/ROUND-UP RIDE - DAY

A large group of PARAMEDICS and FIREFIGHTERS arrives at the scene of the massacre and sets to work helping Betsy and Billy. The blood-smudged Pink Panther waits faithfully by the door to the Round-Up Ride.

INT. JUNGLE OF LOVE/DARK CAVERN - DAY

The Carny stands on the edge of the artificial river, looking upstream. The rifle is strapped across his back and the pistol is in his hand. Light filters in from the end of the tunnel.

Footsteps move quietly toward The Carny. A voice calls out behind him.

VOICE (O.S)

Hey asshole!

The Carny slowly turns and smiles. The gun rises in his hand. BAM!THOOMP! They both fire.

Jack's bullet strikes The Carny in the center of his chest. The Carny's bullet punctures the floor at Jack's feet. The Carny staggers back, then rises. He looks at Jack and smiles. *He lifts his t-shirt to reveal lightweight BODY ARMOR on his chest and abdomen.*

Jack's last bullet is flattened, embedded in the material. The Carny flicks it out with a finger. Jack points his useless gun at The Carny.

JACK (CONT'D)

Drop it or you're dead!

The Carny looks serious for a moment and motions as if he might set down the pistol, then resumes his wide smile and

points the long silencer at Jack. BAM!

The Carny clutches at his neck. Blood pours out in a stream. Surprised, he slowly turns around. A FLASH of light reveals Samantha with Curly's gun leveled in both hands.

She is standing behind an animatronic TIGER. It's eyes light up and it ROARS, swiping with its mechanically-driven paw.

The Carny stares at her for a long moment, then smiles his long, thin smile. He raises his gun. BAM! Samantha puts a bullet in the Carny's forehead, taking off the top of his skull.

Blood runs down over his face. He stumbles forward and falls onto one of the passing boats, firing the pistol into its bottom. THOOMP!

Samantha and Jack, both weary but relieved, look at each other from across the river.

EXT. JUNGLE OF LOVE/RIVER - DAY

COPS and SWAT TEAMS swarm along the banks of the artificial river. They run to the top of the observation bridge and point their guns uselessly downstream.

The little boat bearing The Carny's body floats sluggishly, taking in water from the hole. Gradually it stops and slowly sinks, staining the already dark waters with blood.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/ROUND-UP RIDE - EVENING

The last of the bodies is being carried out of the Round-Up Ride on stretchers and placed into AMBULANCES. Betsy and Billy wash the blood from their faces and arms with rags

and a bucket of water. After a few wipes, the water in the bucket turns crimson.

EXT. MIDWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

The Wheel Of Life, motionless, casts a long shadow across the Midway. The scene is less chaotic, almost still.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/WOODS - LATE AFTERNOON

Curly's body rests on its back in the calm woods. The open eyes stare at nothing.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/TURNSTILES - LATE AFTERNOON

A FIRE TRUCK, several AMBULANCES and myriad POLICE VEHICLES are parked at odd angles to each other. Lights flash silently as the last ambulances are loading the dead and wounded.

REPORTERS stand before cameras, reporting for the evening news. Everyone and every thing casts a long shadow in the late sun.

EXT. FAIRGROUND/PARKING LOT - EVENING

Away from the flashing lights and vehicles Samantha, Jack, Betsy and Billy stand near Betsy's hatchback. Jack's Crown Vic is visible in the background next to The Carny's rusted pick-up, which is being lifted by a TOW TRUCK. Roy's Mustang is parked behind Samantha. BILLY'S PARENTS wait at a distance, near their town car.

Jack's arm is in a sling and Betsy stands close, supporting him. Billy's arm is also in a sort of sling made of gauze.



SAMANTHA

(to Billy)

Did you get shot too?

BILLY

No, I just took some shrapnel.  
From a flower pot. Hey, where'd  
you get the sweet ride?

SAMANTHA

Ah, my trusty steed. Roy left  
the keys in his car. I guess it  
beats walking.

BILLY

(to Jack)

What about you, Jack? a hero  
doesn't even get an ambulance  
ride to the hospital?

JACK

Oh this? It's just a scratch.

BETSY

Tough guy. They just used up all  
the ambulances so I'm driving him.

Jack steps up to Samantha and puts his good arm on her  
shoulder.

JACK

Thanks. You saved my life.

SAMANTHA

You saved mine too.

JACK

Hey, if you get a chance, look

us up. When you get old enough  
I might be looking for a good  
investigator at my practice.

SAMANTHA

I'll come see you in the hospital  
tomorrow. The police want me to  
give them a statement in the morning,  
but I can come by after that.

JACK

That'd be great. How do we reach  
you? To let you know what room  
I'm in.

SAMANTHA

I'll find you.

JACK

I bet you will.

BETSY

(to Jack)

Alright, partner. Let's get you  
to the hospital.

She reaches down and picks up the blood-stained Pink  
Panther doll in one hand and with the other helps Jack to  
the passenger side door of her car. She helps him in,  
pushing the doll in after, then runs around behind the car  
to the driver side.

The car pulls away and goes a short distance, then swerves,  
narrowly missing a parked patrol car.

BETSY (O.S.)

Sorry, sorry.

Samantha stands with Billy. His parents wait at a distance to take him home.

SAMANTHA

So. Mr. Billy. Those were some pretty nice moves down there. You saved my butt. Thanks.

BILLY

Anytime. Hey, I was thinking maybe after the hospital tomorrow, if you're not busy, maybe we could, catch a flick. Or something.

SAMANTHA

Sure. That sounds nice.

BILLY

And hey, I'm really sorry for calling you spooky and all that. That was a really shitty thing to-

Samantha puts a finger to his lips.

SAMANTHA

Shhhhhhh. You watch that mouth.

She takes his hand in hers and produces the fountain pen from her back pocket. He flinches just a little, instinctively. She laughs and pulls off the cap. She begins writing her home phone number on his hand.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Call me tonight. I have a feeling I might want to talk to someone.

BILLY

Yeah, me too.

Billy watches as she gets into Roy's Mustang, starts it up and drives away across the near-empty parking lot, into the setting sun.

FADE OUT.

THE END