

TOMESHA

(The Hole)

A screenplay by
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Story by Guido Chiesa

1988

OPENING CREDITS.

Long dissolve to:

1. EXT. PANAMINT VALLEY. DAY.

From the sky bleached out by the sun to the expanse of desert: the Panamint Valley.

CUT TO

A wide shot of the Ballarat Ghost Town, lying in the haze of the Valley. The sun beats down. Hot winds blow tumbleweed, the only movement in sight.

CUT TO

In the shade of a burntout, dilapidated shack, a BLACK WOMAN is plucking the feathers from a dead chicken and singing a blues song. The feathers float in the listless air and fall to her feet. Her deep, suffering voice is punctuated by the rhythmical sound of metal hitting metal. Nearby, a miner DUSKY is dismantling the rusty wreck of a car. He can't get a bolt off, he bangs on it with a hammer. The part refuses to fall off the wreck. Frustrated and sweaty, Dusky turns toward the shack where the woman was sitting. The chair is empty, there are no feathers on the ground. He picks up a jar, unscrews the lid, leans his head back and takes a swig of liquid. He pauses for a few seconds, then returns to his work. The blues song continues on the soundtrack.

CUT TO

A wide shot of the Panamint Valley. Its beauty is awesome, fantastic, majestic... The wind overwhelms the voice of the woman. Only the sound of Dusky's hammer keeps echoing ...

Sounds from the following scene come up on the track.

2. EXT. CHRYSTIE STREET. DAY.

The sound of trucks, vans and cars. Honking and sirens in the distance. A cacophony of the NY sound.

At the corner of Stanton St., a bum in his midthirties ABBIE is cleaning the windshield of a car stopped at the traffic light. He's wiping it with a worn yellow rag. Abbie's no ordinary bum. From how he's dressed, he looks more like a beatnik than a bum. He finishes one car and he moves towards a beatup station wagon, the light changes. The station wagon moves on.

CUT TO

The same station wagon pulls up and parks across the street from a tenement building. At the foot of the tenement, three Spanish guys

are unloading racks of clothes from a panel truck. The wheeled racks look heavier than they are. There are two people sitting in the front seat of the station wagon.

The man behind the wheel, FORRESTER, is in his midforties. He wears his hair long and he has a medium length beard. The beard and the hair are almost completely grey. He's wearing faded blue jeans, worn black boots and a leather jacket. A miniature camera hangs on a chain around his neck. The girl sitting on the passenger side is much younger, barely twenty, very beautiful. Her name is CACTUS. She has long blond hair and is wearing dark clothes.

As soon as the station wagon stops moving, Cactus is about to get out when she notices that Forrester has not yet turned off the ignition.

CACTUS

What are you waiting for? Isn't this the right place?

The man scratches his beard and stares up at the building. Cactus seems anxious. A taxi pulls up in front of the tenement. A balding, well dressed man in his late thirties steps out and gives the driver a bill, gets a receipt.

FORRESTER

Holy shit, man! I knew I had a bad vibe...

Cactus cranes her neck to look where Forrester's looking.

CACTUS

Who's that?

FORRESTER

Good old Jake Saltzman... Danny's agent...

CACTUS

Who cares...

She grabs her door handle, but Forrester grabs her shoulder. JAKE SALTZMAN has disappeared in the building.

FORRESTER

I know Danny and I know Jake and I know it would be very uncool for all of us to be there at the same time. (pause) We'll wait, Cactus.

Cactus lets go of the door handle. Forrester lets go of her shoulder. She turns away, saddened and impatient.

3. INT. HALLWAY. DAY.

The tenement hallway of Danny's building. It smells of stale piss and the paint is peeling off the walls. Jake Saltzman climbs the stairs, holding a handkerchief to his nose. Garbage is all over. At the next

landing, a group of Spanish women who work in a sweatshop are arguing in Spanish around the elevator.

JAKE

Unfuckingbelievable, guy wins a Pulitzer and ends up like this
...unfuckingbelievable...

4.INT.DANNY'S LOFT.DAY.

DANNY's lying in an unmade bed, propped up on pillows. He's naked to the waist and wearing a cheap all taped up cassette walkman. At the other end of the room, about thirty feet away, is a large cardboard box, with a big target painted on it. Danny's got a BB gun propped between his big toe and the next one, aimed at the cardboard box. He squints down the sight and squeezes off a couple of shots. Bull's eye. Bull's eye. He's a damn good shot.

Because the walkman is turned up too loud and he's intensely fixated on the target, he doesn't hear Jake's knock at the door. But the door is unlocked and Jake just lets himself in. The place is like a scrapbook of Danny's life. Ripped pictures are hanging sideways from the walls, newspapers and books are scattered all over the floor among beer cans, dirty clothes and record covers. Malcolm X's poster with a gun in his hand and the motto "By any means necessary" is precariously nailed right above Danny's head. A broken down typewriter sits on a table covered up with dust. Jake is like a fish out ofwater. Danny finally sees Jake and pulls his headphones off his head. Danny's mouth drops wide open...

DANNY

...Jake...

JAKE

Danny!

They shake hands. Jake's looking around, trying to get his bearings. Danny gets himself up on the bed.

DANNY

Jake, man, what brings you to this neck of the woods?

Jake's nervous, pacing around.

DANNY

Can I get you a beer?

JAKE

Glass of water will do.(pause) I've been trying to get you on the phone for two months Danny...

Danny goes over to the sink and tries to find a clean glass. The sink is full of dirty dishes. He finds a halfway decent one, just a couple of cigarettes on the bottom, and a film of dried milk on the sides. He rinses the glass, the cigarette butts flush out, then fills it up with fresh New York Citytap water.

JAKE (cont'd)

...I must've left a hundred messages on your machine... then no machine...just the phone ringin'...then they turn off the phone...I check around and I hear you're in town, so bein' as smart as I am, I figure you don't want to see me...

Danny hands Jake the cloudy glass of water.

JAKE

This Perrier?

DANNY

Tap water...

JAKE

Oh...

He looks at the glass in the light: microscopic organisms are having a field day. Jake pours the glass into a dead flower pot.

JAKE

So you don't return my phone calls. I'm only your agent, I can take a joke. You wanna be a bum? Be a bum! Fuck you. But...you're a talented bum, Danny...besides it looks bad!

DANNY

Jake uh...

JAKE

Don't interrupt! I spent four fifty on a cab ride down here to say my piece as I was sayin'! ...it looks bad. I'm a great fuckin' agent. I eat, sleep and fuck deals, and I have a Pulitzerprize winner who hasn't turned out chicken shit in four years. You're makin' me look bad, Danny.

Jake is pacing, Danny is sitting on a chair like a bad boy. Head slung down onto his chest.

DANNY

I'm sorry Jake... What can I say? I... uh (sighs).

Jake is angry with Danny, but he clearly feels for him. He stares out the window. Down below, the station wagon sits across the street. He lights a cigarette, throws the match down to the street. He puffs and

turns and looks at Danny. He's relaxed, his piece is over. Behind Danny are two framed photos on the wall. One is of two young, pretty Vietnamese girls. The photo was taken in Bangkok in 1980. The other is of the same two girls with Danny in NYC, all three are smiling and happy standing in front of the Statue of Liberty.

JAKE

Look Danny! (Danny looks up at Jake) Our contract comes up this month. Do you wanna resign with me?

DANNY (mumbling)

Uh...yeah, Jake, of course...

JAKE

So why aren't you working? Why are you torturing yourself?

Danny looks pained. Jake puts out the cigarette on the floor. Jake walks over to where Danny is sitting. He stares at him for a second, almost moved. He pulls out a key and puts it on the table in front of Danny...

JAKE

The key to my house in Montauk. Why don't you get some paper and pencils and go out there and write. It'll do you good to get out of this depressing dump.

Danny laughs, as much out of self pity as amusement. It's obvious he has a great deal of affection for Jake.

DANNY

Thanks Jake! But... I can't sit myself down in front of a piece of paper and spin a yarn. I'm a journalist ...it's...it's... y'know me Jake...

JAKE

I'm not pushing you, but you can't sit here pissing over a couple of beautiful broads you haven't seen in three years! They're not coming back!

DANNY (resolutely)

That's not the point, Jake! I can't write after what happened, don't you understand? The problem is me, not them.

Jake shakes his head. It's obvious he understands, but knows he can't help him. Jake pulls out a twenty dollar bill from his pocket and throws it on the table.

JAKE

Buy yourself a case of Perriers and think about what I said, I mean it. You're too good of a writer to be sitting around with your thumb up your ass... (pause) have you heard anything about them?

DANNY

Not in a while ... they were in Akron... I don't know...
Jake heads for the door.

DANNY (ironic)

Jake, (Jake turns) have you ever been in love?

JAKE

Sure... once... but I got over it. Have a nice day, Danny...

Danny is alone again. He goes to the window. Stares out for a moment,
then goes back to pick up the money on the table.

5.EXT.DANNY'S BUILDING.DAY.

Abbie is counting his change on a park bench in front of Danny's
building. Jake comes out of it and starts looking for a cab, when he
sees Abbie...

JAKE

Hey Abbie how's business today?

Abbie shakes his head, smiling.

ABBIE

Always slow on Tuesdays.

Jake smiles. A cab stops, Jake gets in and waves at Abbie.

JAKE (to himself)

Just like Danny... another wasted genius...

When the cab takes off, Abbie notices Forrester and Cactus getting
out of their car and heading for Danny's building. Cactus is
carrying a white, bulging shoe box that's barely tied together with
string.

6.INT.DANNY'S LOFT.DAY.

As if under the influence of Jake's words, Danny is halfheartedly
putting some order in the loft. He starts to fix one of the pictures
on the wall. It won't stay straight. Too much work. He rips it off
and dumps it in the garbage pile below. There's a knock on the door.
Danny goes to open it...

DANNY (as he walks to the door)

What's the matter Jake, do you want your money back...

Danny opens the door. Forrester and Cactus stand there. For a brief moment they just check each other out. Danny is surprised not to see Jake and unable to identify his visitors.

FORRESTER

Danny! Doncha recognize me?

Danny obviously doesn't. His eyes dart from Forrester to Cactus and back to Forrester.

FORRESTER

Joliet. 1971.

DANNY

What?

FORRESTER

The joint, man! Doncha 'member?

Danny looks like he's seen a ghost. A time capsule from another age.

DANNY

... Forrester!?

Forrester goes to hug Danny, like a long lost brother. Forrester holds Danny in a bear hug.

DANNY

Holy shit... Forrester! I can think of a million places where I've been with you and you come up with the fuckin' joint!

Danny stares at Cactus over Forrester's shoulders. She looks away, slightly embarrassed. Forrester lets go.

FORRESTER

That's right, bro'! Ain't ya gonna invite us in?

DANNY

Oh sure, sure... Come on in.

Forrester and Cactus enter, looking around. Danny is still in a limbo state, somewhat confused by the sudden appearance of these uninvited guests.

DANNY

Would you like something to drink?

FORRESTER

You bet! I'm dying for a beer!

Danny walks to the fridge, always keeping an eye on Cactus. Forrester notices the messy state of the loft and sees that Cactus has spotted the photos of the Vietnamese girls.

DANNY (to Cactus)
What 'bout you?

CACTUS
Nothing.

Danny checks the fridge. Some leftover Chinese food dating back to the Tang dynasty, mustard, no frills items... and finally a long forgotten can of cheap ale. Danny brings the brew to the table. They all sit. Cactus next to Forrester. Danny across from them. Forrester opens his can and practically drains it in one gulp.

FORRESTER
Whew! (wipes his mouth with his hand) That's great! We been on the road for twenty-four hours. I needed that.

Cactus keeps shifting her intense eyes from Danny to the loft. Danny watches her. She's a strange and fragile thing.

FORRESTER
Oh, I'm sorry. Still got no manners. Cactus, this is Danny.

She reaches across the table to shake his hand.

CACTUS
I heard a lot about you.

Danny shakes her hand.

FORRESTER
I been telling her what a genius you are.

Danny smirks.

DANNY
What a genius I was...

FORRESTER
Yeah. I kinda thought you'd be living in a mansion by now...

Danny shrugs.

DANNY
Good to see you, Eagle Eye!

FORRESTER (moved)

Eagle Eye. Haven't heard that name in a long time.

DANNY

Still takin' pictures?

FORRESTER

Sure. But it's just a hobby now, not like the old days, not like what we did.

DANNY

Where d'you come from?

FORRESTER

Canada. Been living up there since the last time I got busted by the FBI. If I'd stayed here ...fuck... who knows...I'd probably be back behind bars by now... or worse... Anyway, what a career you've had. I'm mighty proud of you Danny. Shit, I still can't believe it ... Black Panthers, Attica, Bangkok ... We fuckin' did it all, right Dan?

DANNY (just a bit uneasy)

Well, that was long ago... it's all history by now. (smirks)

FORRESTER

Yeah. I haven't heard much 'bout you lately. How long's it been since you wrote something?

DANNY

Years... Fuckin' years.

FORRESTER

Well, that's what I came to talk to you 'bout.

He turns to take the cardboard box. As Cactus sees that, suddenly she seems uneasy. She leans over to Forrester and whispers in his ear. Forrester nods, then pauses as if looking for words...

FORRESTER

... Can she, uh... take a bath?

Danny is surprised.

DANNY

... A bath?... Sure, it's a little messy ... but g'ahead...

Cactus smiles, gets up and heads for the bathroom. Both men watch her as she closes the door. Forrester grabs the cardboard box and with a blade cuts the string. Danny's looking at the bathroom door. They hear the sound of water running.

DANNY

Kind of young for you, isn't she?

FORRESTER (dead serious)
She's eighteen and it's not like that!

DANNY
Oh ... sorry ... I didn't mean ... what were you sayin'?

Forrester pulls out of the box a handful of old letters and holds them in his hand. He looks straight at Danny, his voice is changed, no more time for memories.

FORRESTER
It's good to see you Danny. It really is. But I didn't come all this way just to bullshit...

DANNY
I figured that...

FORRESTER
I need your help and I thought you're the kind of guy who could get into this.

He holds up the letters.

DANNY
What's this?

FORRESTER
This... it's a fuckin' outasight story, Danny... This is that little girl who's in your bathroom. Remember, after we met, I told you I hung out for a while with the Manson Family...

DANNY
Oh c'mon, you're not gonnna lay that on me again!

FORRESTER
... just, listen to me, OK?

DANNY (annoyed)
Fuck, Forrester... don't waste your time with that Helter Skelter crap...

Forrester pounds the table with his fist.

FORRESTER
I drove twelve hundred and fifty miles!

Danny looks at him, he's resigned to listen. Forrester takes a long breath.

FORRESTER

Give me ten minutes to explain. If you don't like it after that, I'll leave, OK?

DANNY

G'ahead. I'm listenin'.

CUT TO

In the bathroom, Cactus is not at all taking a bath. She's scrubbing the filthy tub with a sponge. She stops for a few seconds. She can hear Forrester talking in the loft. She begins to hum a Beatles' tune (Revolution), forcing herself not to listen.

CUT TO

Forrester is showing Danny one of the letters. It's written in beautiful calligraphy and it starts with: "My lovely daughter..."

FORRESTER

Cactus found these a week ago in her foster parents house... we thought she was dead...

CUT TO

Cactus stops working. She catches a few words here and there. Then she closes her eyes, concentrates herself, starts working again.

CUT TO

Danny's pacing around. He's like a different human being. Energized. Seemingly out of his depression. He's smoking a cigarette. Forrester pulls out from his jacket a photo book of old pictures. He shows Danny one of a group of young people, mostly girls, in a tribunal court: most of them have crosses carved on their foreheads. The same black woman we saw in Ballarat is in the shot.

DANNY

When did you take these?

FORRESTER

At Rhonda's trial. Two years after Manson got convicted... she's in the second row...

CUT TO

Cactus has finished her work and now is taking a shower. The water comes down fast. She keeps humming. She closes the shower. Next door they've stopped talking.

CUT TO

Cactus comes out of the bathroom, her hair wrapped in a towel. She's stunned by the renewed energy in the room. She's also stunning looking. Danny looks at her, then back at Forrester. Forrester looks at Cactus. The moment is very tense.

CACTUS

Did you tell him 'bout Rhonda?

FORRESTER

Yeah.

CACTUS

Will he help us find her?

FORRESTER

He hasn't said.

Danny is unable to keep his eyes off Cactus. He seems totally captured by her presence. He walks back in the loft, glancing every once in a while at her. Cactus and Forrester glance at each other. Danny grabs a dusty cowboy hat hanging from a coat hanger. He puts it on and sits on a chair. There's a picture on the floor, sticking out of a garbage pile. Danny picks it up. It shows Danny's smiling, doing a victory sign as he's being carried away, handcuffed to a cop. The contrast between the picture and the actual Danny is striking, almost like they were two different persons. He smiles, maybe out of self pity, and turns to Forrester.

DANNY (shows the picture)

Hey, Eagle Eye..

FORRESTER

Oh man! I almost got busted myself for taking that shot!

Forrester and Danny giggle, then start laughing, releasing the tension of their meeting. Cactus smiles, uncertain how to interpret their laughter. Danny turns his head away, then back to Forrester..

FORRESTER

So whaddaya say?

DANNY (smiling)

Can your car make it?

FORRESTER

Sure man! It's a fuckin' Chrysler.

DANNY

What about money?

FORRESTER
Money I got.

Danny goes to the bed and sits on the edge. He's lost in thoughts. Then mumbles something to himself, laughs and starts throwing socks, underwear, tshirts, toothpaste, toothbrush into an old gym bag. Cactus has a big smile on her face. So does Forrester.

FORRESTER (to Danny)
Maybe we should sleep here for the night and get an early start in the morning.

Danny puts on his cowboy hat.

DANNY (not very serious)
Better not. I may change my mind.

7.EXT.DANNY'S BUILDING.DAY.

Abbie is talking to a street hooker. The hooker is holding Abbie's index and middle fingers together in front of his face and showing him the proper way to wear a condom.

HOOKER (chewing gum)
See... look... let's say this is your pecker. You just roll the rubber down slowly... like so...

She continues her "lesson", just as Danny, Forrester and Cactus exit the building. Cactus is still wearing the towel around her hair. They all stop and look at Abbie, who's standing there with the prophylactic on his fingers. He looks fairly ridiculous.

DANNY
Hey Abbie, what are you? A sidewalk gynecologist?

The hooker pulls the rubber off his fingers and sticks it inside the pocket of her short shorts. She walks away on her high heels.

HOOKER
See you later Abbie.

Cactus, Forrester and Danny cross the street to the waiting station wagon which has been ticketed. Forrester grabs the ticket, crumples it and throws it away. Abbie follows them across the street.

DANNY
Ever been to California, Abbie?

ABBIE
California?

Abbie looks a bit confused, he looks at Forrester and Cactus warily.

FORRESTER
You mind driving, Danny? I'm really busted.

DANNY
Can't. No license.

ABBIE
I got one.

Danny nods at Abbie. Abbie sits at the wheel. Danny is about to get inside the car when he notices Forrester and Cactus looking as if to ask: "This guy with a license??"

DANNY (ironic)
Abbie? He's... he's my lawyer...I wouldn't be surprised if he had a credit card..

8.EXT.NYC STREETS.DAY.

Various shots of the old station wagon as it heads up and through the city to the Lincoln Tunnel. There's a kind of quiet in the car, an air of finality, as if to show that we will never be back this way again. The honking, screeching, din of the city. Rush hour. Sirens. Screams. Fade away as the car enters the Lincoln Tunnel. The darkness of the tunnel.

9.INT.STATION WAGON.TWILIGHT.

From dark to light, the light of late afternoon. Since we are heading West the light is directly in the driver's Abbie's eyes. Forrester and Cactus have fallen asleep in the back seat. They are now in good hands as Abbie drives towards Route 80 going West, passing the Meadowlands, passing the New Jersey factories, passing the town of Powerville.

As Abbie drives, he plays a onehanded woeful tune on his harmonica. The harmonica and the tune will be a constant, everpresent theme of the film.

Danny is attempting to read the letters in the box, by the waning light of the day. They are beautiful, forlorn letters and they have Danny transfixed.

VOICE (v.o.)

"... after all, we just said fuck it, we're leaving for the desert. The desert begins in Ballarat, the ghost town, the last town of your world, the first of ours. It's amazing how worlds change.."

The female voice will be the same throughout the film, reading the letters with an almost childlike enthusiasm.

ABBIE

Do we stay on this road?

Danny nods without looking up. Abbie tries a new tune on the mouth harp. He misses a note.

ABBIE

Why we goin' to California?

Danny looks up from his reading.

DANNY

We're gonna look for the hole.

Abbie looks up a bit confused. He looks from Danny back to the road.

ABBIE

The hole?

Danny nods.

ABBIE

Whose hole?

Danny smiles, looks at Abbie, then back to the letters. It's getting too dark to read.

DANNY

The hole.

ABBIE

Oh.

CUT TO

The station wagon drives by the town of Hope.

10.EXT.HIGHWAY.NIGHT.

The car zips over a bridge that spans the Delaware Water Gap. A sign points out that " we are now entering the state of Pennsylvania."

CUT TO

Forrester is still asleep in the back seat, lightly snoring. Next to him, Cactus is listening to Danny's walkman and looking outside the

window. Danny looks at her and gently lifts up her headphones.

DANNY

What are you listenin' to?

Cactus smiles and hands him the walkman.

DANNY

Keep it...I just felt like...

She looks at him, waiting for more.

DANNY

... I... (pause) Never mind... we'll find Rhonda.

Danny turns, uneasy. She smiles, just a shadow of sadness on her face. Forrester wakes up.

FORRESTER (half asleep)

I gotta pee...

11. EXT. SERVICE STATION. NIGHT.

The car is being serviced. Cactus is sleeping in the back seat. Danny paces. Abbie walks around the car and kicks the tires. Forrester is nowhere to be seen. Cactus wakes up, steps out of the car and stretches. The SERVICE STATION ATTENDANT is checking the engine. Abbie's cleaning the windshield with a yellow rag (the same one he'll use throughout the film).

CACTUS (to Danny)

What're we doin'?

DANNY

Gettin' gas.

CACTUS

Where are we?

DANNY

Light Street, Pennsylvania.

The service station attendant slams down the hood and walks over to Abbie.

ATTENDANT

That's twenty-two fifty, sir.

Abbie points to Danny. As the attendant walks over to Danny, he points at Forrester who has just appeared. Danny gets in the front seat,

Abbie's cleaning all the windows, the rear, the side.

DANNY

C'mon Abbie, you can wash the car later!

Forrester walks to the car. He's clumsily holding his jacket. He sees the attendant waiting for the money. He fishes into his pocket, fumbling to keep the jacket closed. He pays and gets in the front seat.

FORRESTER

That's OK, son. I'll drive. (to Danny) Where to now?

His three mates look at him, like he just did some drugs. He smiles and unfolds his jacket: inside is a fan belt and three cans of motor oil. The three look at each other. The attendant comes out of the office and walks toward the car.

FORRESTER (nervous)

C'mon, let's go!

The door slams and the car takes off.

ATTENDANT

Your change, hey!

12.EXT.CONVENIENCE STORE.NIGHT.

Forrester and Cactus exit with a large paper bag full of food and drinks. Danny is at the pay phone next to the car.

DANNY

... yeah... yeah... so I can find her at the library... it's on my way... thanks Sonny, so long.

He hangs the phone and walks to the car. Forrester is waiting for him.

FORRESTER (to Danny)

There's a motel just down the road. You sure you don't wanna just keep drivin'?

DANNY

It's a long way to Death Valley. We need some sleep.

FORRESTER

You could sleep in the back. The seats fold down.

13.INT.LIGHT STREET MOTEL.NIGHT.

The car pulls up to the motel. It seems deserted. A sign advertises a TV in every room. Forrester and Danny go inside the small cramped office. An OLD LADY is watching TV. She gets up as the guys enter.

MOTEL OWNER
Good evening.

FORRESTER
Hi! We'd like a room for the night. . .

Danny pulls Forrester away as the proprietress goes to get a key.

DANNY
We better get two rooms. I want my own bed.

FORRESTER (sarcastic)
Maybe we should go to the Hilton.

DANNY (irritated by his frugality)
I thought you said you have money.

FORRESTER
Not that flush. At the rate we're goin' now we'll be broke by St. Louis.

DANNY (angry)
Alright Forrester, we're headin' back to New York...this sucks...

FORRESTER
Danny, Danny, c'mon!

DANNY
Just don't bullshit me! How much money you got?

FORRESTER
'bout eightyfive bucks!

The old lady taps the keys on the counter.

MOTEL OWNER
That'll be fourteen fifty...

FORRESTER
Uh... Ma'am... you got any rooms with four beds?

MOTEL OWNER
No. We only have rooms with twin beds.

FORRESTER
Uh... OK... give me two rooms then.

The old lady turns around to get another key. The door to the office slams as Danny angrily stalks out. The old lady turns with two keys in her hands.

MOTEL OWNER

Rooms nine and ten. Down at the end.

He grabs for the keys and heads for the door.

MOTEL OWNER

Excuse me, mister. That's twenty-nine dollars. Pay in advance like the sign says.

She points to the sign over her head, which says:

"Pay in advance. No checks accepted. No credit cards. In God we trust. All others pay CA\$H!"

14. EXT. LIGHT MOTEL. NIGHT.

Danny's leaning against the car, still fuming. Abbie is throwing stones at the road. Forrester comes out of the office. He tosses the key to Danny. Danny catches it, grabs his stuff out of the car and heads for room ten.

DANNY (loudly over his shoulder)

Eighty five bucks Forrester! I oughta beat your fuckin' head in...

FORRESTER (to himself)

It's fiftysix now.

Abbie follows after his friend. Cactus comes over to Forrester.

CACTUS

What's with him?

FORRESTER (walking away)

Nothing. Nothing. They should write a song for him. (sings) "When a man loves two women..."

15.INT.MOTEL ROOM #10.SAME NIGHT.

Danny's clothes are lying on a chair. Abbie's sitting in his underwear on the bed, watching a movie on TV, and eating from a bag of potato chips. The sound of water running in the bathtub. It stops.

ABBIE

Hey Danny, what you doin' in there?

DANNY (o.s.)

I'm bowling.

ABBIE (nodding)
What's the score?

16.INT.MOTEL ROOM #9.NIGHT.

Forrester's in his underwear. Drinking a beer and eating from a pint of chocolate ice cream. He's sitting on his bed with an open camera bag and a couple of cameras in front of him. He's cleaning the lenses and blowing out dust from inside the camera. The sound of water running in the bathtub.

17.INT.MOTEL ROOM #10.NIGHT.

Abbie's under the covers. The lamp next to Danny's bed is still on. He's busy writing in a notebook.

DANNY
Abbie...

ABBIE (trying to sleep)
...Wha...?

DANNY
You remember Charlie Manson?

ABBIE (sleepy)
...the guy who killed that... movie star ...

DANNY
He didn't kill that movie star. His family did it.

ABBIE
...you mean... his mother and father and sisters?

DANNY (smirks)
Sure...he didn't even know who his father was...

Danny talks looking at his pad. Abbie is slowly falling asleep.

DANNY
Listen to this... after Manson got convicted, part of his family moved to Death Valley ...they believed Helter Skelter was coming, the end of the world, and Charlie told them there was a hole in the desert where they could save themselves and start a new society. You follow me?

Abbie doesn't answer.

DANNY

That girl, Cactus ... her mother is one of the family and she's still in Death Valley looking for the hole (pauses, looks at his pad). They are still there, twenty years later Abbie, they've been looking for almost twenty years and nobody knows if they ever found it... I can't get it out of my head, do you know what I mean?

Abbie can't answer. His head is bugged in the pillow. He's dead asleep. Danny doesn't even notice it. He keeps writing on his pad, totally consumed by his reasoning.

18.INT.MOTEL ROOM #9.NIGHT.

Forrester's under the covers. Lying on his belly. His camera equipment on the night table next to him. Cactus, free spirit, child of the Manson family that she is, is pacing around, wearing only bikini underwear. She's unselfconscious about her body.

CACTUS
Forrester?

FORRESTER
What?

CACTUS
Can you talk for a minute?

FORRESTER
Sure, why not?

Forrester turns around. He's trying not to fall asleep. Silence for a couple of seconds.

CACTUS
You knew his... two women?

FORRESTER
Lai and Peng? (laughs) Sure. Two of the most gorgeous chicks I ever met...

CACTUS
Did they leave him?

Forrester nods.

CACTUS
Why?

FORRESTER
Why? ... It's hard to say. He made the mistake of bringing them to the States. See, when he met them they were two young, lost Vietnamese

girls just off a boat floating in the ocean... All of a sudden they are with this guy that writes a book about them and the media makes them stars... heroes... you know, they freaked out... they split and took a job in Akron, anything to get away from the hype around them... I think that if Danny knew, maybe he wouldn't have wrote that book...

Silence again.

CACTUS

I feel that Danny is afraid ...y'know what I mean, Forrester ... it takes more than two women to lose faith in yourself.

FORRESTER (falling asleep)

Maybe... goodnight Cactus.

She pauses for a few seconds.

CACTUS

Goodnight Forrester.

19.INT.MOTEL ROOM #10.MORNING.

Danny rolls over and moans, his head completely stuck in the pillow. Danny opens one eye. He sees Abbie sitting on a chair in his underwear.

DANNY

What's with you?

Abbie is completely impassive.

ABBIE

They're gone. The car's gone. Our clothes are gone.

Danny jumps up in bed and looks around. Only his wallet is sitting on the dresser where his clothes were. Danny wraps a towel around his midsection.

DANNY

What time is it?

Abbie shrugs. Danny runs out of the room into the sunlight. The car is gone. He rushes to the door of room 9. No one is there, the room's empty. He runs back into his room. He doesn't know what to do. Frustrated, he takes it out on Abbie.

DANNY

Y'know, sometimes I wish you weren't so fuckin' calm...

ABBIE

Your friends, Danny, not mine...

Danny curses him silently. He picks up some change and runs across the parking lot to a phone booth. He drops some coins into the phone and dials. The phone rings on the other end; it's Jake's answering machine.

DANNY

Jake, it's Danny, if you're there pick up the phone... I was onto a great story, Jake... Jake! they fuckin' ran out!...

Danny changes his tone, calms himself down. After all, it's only a machine...

DANNY

I mean we, ran out of money... but it's a great fuckin' story, Jake... you want me to write Jake, you gotta help me... wire me some money... a few hundred bucks care of Western Union in Akron, I'll be there... tonight. I'll call you back when I can. Jake, please... this is for real... (the machine beeps)

Danny hangs up the phone and goes back to the room.

CUT TO

Abbie's got the TV on with no sound and is playing the harmonica. They sit on their beds, not knowing what to do, staring at their toes on the floor. Suddenly they look up and standing in the doorway are Cactus and Forrester. She's holding their clothes, washed and neatly folded. Danny and Abbie look at each other and laugh.

FORRESTER

Whatsamatter with you guys? What so funny?

20.INT.STATION WAGON.DAY.

Danny is drinking coffee from a paper cup.

DANNY

Just don't ever do that again.

Forrester's driving, Danny's next to him, Abbie's in the backseat, and Cactus is in the jump seat all the way in the back, looking out the back window. She's upset. Abbie turns and looks at Cactus.

ABBIE

These clothes were never washed before... thanks.

CUT TO

The station wagon rolls down the highway. Passing Mechanicsville, Limestoneville and Mingoville. As they pass through the Poconos there's a serene kind of beauty.

DANNY (o.s.)

Pull off here and follow the signs to State College.

FORRESTER (o.s.)

Anything you say, Boss!... Why State College?

DANNY (o.s.)

We can gas up and you guys can have lunch while I hit the library.

FORRESTER (o.s.)

The library?

DANNY (o.s.)

Yeah. Never heard of a library?

FORRESTER (o.s.)

Yeah. A library. That's like a prison for books.

21.EXT.CAFETERIA IN COLLEGE TOWN.DAY.

The station wagon pulls into a parking spot and everyone gets out. It's a real University town, lots of students, lots of unbridled energy. Danny takes off, asking a student for directions to the library. Forrester goes to the cafeteria to get lunch.

22.INT.COLLEGE LIBRARY.DAY.

The library. Students studying. The light is dim. A few million books. Danny makes his way between the stacks. He's carrying some books. They are: "The Family" by Ed Sanders, "Helter Skelter" by Vincent Bugliosi and "Manson" by Nuel Emmons which is the newest of the lot. He meanders to the geological section. He places the books on a table and heads for the shelves. It seems like Danny is having a difficult time finding what he's looking for. There's a WOMAN in her early thirties in the same section. She's overwhelmed by geological books and maps. She's wearing thick unattractive glasses. Her hair is done up in a bun. Her clothes are disheveled and she wears no make up. She notices Danny, but pays little attention to him, consumed as she is in her own reading.

DANNY (a little too loudly)

Hi!

WOMAN

Shhh!

DANNY (whispering)

Excuse me! I wonder if you could assist me.

The woman looks over her bifocals and gives Danny the once over. She might think that Danny's coming on to her, but since not many men do, she doubts it. However, on a closer inspection, the woman is not totally unattractive. In fact, if she dressed less conservatively, she might actually be pretty.

DANNY (acting)

Sorry to bother you, but I forgot my library card and I wonder if you might be so kind as to take these books out for me?

The woman is obviously not buying his story.

WOMAN (sarcastic)

Young man, are you too shy to ask the librarian?

DANNY (acting)

I'm sorry to be such a pest but I really don't have time for that..

He pushes the Manson books at her. She looks down at the titles, then looks around.

WOMAN

Why are you in this section? This is the geology section.

Danny looks around like he's lost, really cute.

DANNY

Well...I have to write this paper on Death Valley and..

The mention of the word Death Valley touches a chord in her. She changes her tone.

WOMAN

Death Valley?

CUT TO

WIDE SHOT: We see but cannot hear as Danny is obviously explaining to the woman what he's looking for and what he's doing. They keep talking as they walk to the desk and she checks out his books.

23.EXT.LIBRARY.DAY.

Danny and the woman exit the library. They are walking through the campus. Talking animatedly. Finally, at the corner near to the cafeteria they stop. The woman points in one direction, Danny in another. They shake hands and split up. Danny goes toward his group. Abbie tosses him a large sandwich. Danny sits on the hood of the car,

looking up at the sun, eating the sandwich in big gusty bites. Chewing it and chewing it. Acting like it was the most delicious thing he ever ate, like it was some filet mignon. Forrester sleeps with one eye open behind the wheel. Abbie and Cactus are sitting on the tailgate. Cactus comes around in front of Danny. She smiles at him, subtly trying to gain his attention.

FORRESTER
So, what's the score?

DANNY
Lovely day. Lovely.

Abbie looks up at the sky to where Danny is looking. Forrester gets out of the car, annoyed that Danny isn't answering.

FORRESTER
I don't need a fuckin' weatherman... Danny!

DANNY (finally looks up at him)
What do we know about the hole?

Both Forrester and Cactus look perplexed.

FORRESTER
Well, it's in Death Valley.. (pause, unable to come up with more)

DANNY
Exactly. We don't know much. But soon we will... all we have to do is... wait.

Forrester picks up the Manson books, studies them for a couple of seconds.

FORRESTER
From these?

DANNY
Lovely day. Ain't it?

24.INT.APARTMENT.DAY.

The apartment of the woman that Danny met in the library. A small, unattractive, claustrophobic box: decorated without any rhyme or reason. On the walls are many geological maps. No paintings or photos. She is packing some clothes into an overnight bag. She dictates a message on the machine.

WOMAN
This is Professor Linda Barren. I'm leaving for a research project

out ofstate for a few weeks, please don't leave any messages. I will not be checking in with my machine. Thank you.

She flips a couple of buttons.

25.INT.OFFICE. DAY.

Professor LINDA BARREN enters the office of the Department of Geology. She has changed her clothes to a more casual outfit and is carrying an attache case. There's no one in the office. She makes sure to lock the door. She goes right for a safe in one corner of the room. She spins the combination lock and twists to the numbers : 093517. The door to the safe opens. Inside are two stacks of hundred dollar bills. She pulls out one of them and leaves the other. She places the cash inside the attache case, then goes to a filing cabinet and pulls out a number of files and maps. There's a huge geological survey map of Death Valley on the wall of the office which she carefully unpins from the wall, folds neatly and places inside the case. She takes one final look around the room. She smiles. Then as she turns, looking at what she's leaving behind, a mad cackle comes from somewhere deep inside her.

26.EXT.CAMPUS.DAY.

Cactus and Abbie are sitting on the tailgate. Abbie is reading one of Cactus' mother's letters.

VOICE (v.o.)

"... the desert is the perfect place because nobody wants it. They call it a wasteland, but it's superbeautiful out here. The rocks are pink and mint green and baby blue. Everything hides under its opposite."Abbie keeps reading, then stops and giggles.

CACTUS

Whatsamatter?

ABBIE

Your mom says that the generation of the eighties is the generation of the swine. (not offensive) Mom's pretty wierd, huh?
Cactus shrugs.

CACTUS

I don't really know her. (pause) What's your mother like?

ABBIE

She was an Acoma.

CACTUS (very confused)

... you mean... in a coma?

ABBIE

An Acoma. New Mexico Apache.

CACTUS (impressed)

You an Indian?

Cactus and Abbie turn around as Linda comes running up to the car. Danny's introducing her to Forrester.

CACTUS

Who's that?

27.INT.ROUTE 80.LATER SAME DAY.

The car zips by a sign that says "Turkey City, Pennsylvania." Forrester is driving and Cactus sits in the seat next to him she has her hand out of the window, doing "an airplane wing" (when she tilts her palm up, her hand and arm rises; when she tilts her palm down, her hand and palm sink). Abbie is way in the back along with everybody's bags. It's getting crowded back there.

Danny and Linda are in between, maps spread out on their laps. Linda's attache case is between her and the door and the way she sits, it is as if she's protecting it. Everybody's listening to her.

LINDA

... in the Matmata desert of Tunisia the cave people have been living underground for over two thousand years...in fact, it is the only way they could insulate themselves from the heat of the day and the cold of the night.The desert has amazing possibilities for life...

DANNY

So you think the hole's for real?

LINDA

Oh, very definitely, it's only a question of where.

The station wagon passes the sign on Route 80 that reads: "Welcome to Ohio".

28.EXT.BERLIN CENTER,OHIO.AFTERNOON.

Having driven off Route 80 onto Route 76 the group has pulled off to a little town called "Berlin Center". The car is being gassed up at a gas station. Abbie is cleaning the windows. Forrester's taking a photo of the gas station attendant, a funny looking guy in a cap and overalls. Forrester calls Danny aside.

FORRESTER

I think you made a mistake in asking that professor to come with us.

DANNY

Is that so?

FORRESTER

I think so. Danny turns and starts to walk away.

FORRESTER (angry)

Danny!

Danny turns around.

FORRESTER

Don't ever turn your back on me again!

DANNY

Look, Forrester! You wanna play Eastman Kodak, g'ahead! But remember, you came to me. I didn't come to you. You want me to find Rhonda? OK. I will. But I will do it my way!

FORRESTER (shaken)

Danny look, I'm sorry... it's... that professor... I don't know, there's something 'bout her...

Danny comes up to Forrester and puts his arm on his shoulder.

DANNY (sharp)

That professor has one obsession in life: find this hole she thinks is in Death Valley... she's been out there at least five times and they never let her finish her work... her department, the other geologists, nobody believes her. She wants this hole just as much as we do. Understand?

Forrester twirls his beard.

FORRESTER

Maybe... but I still say she's not all that straight...

29. INT. STATION WAGON. EVENING.

They are entering Akron, Ohio. The factories and the postindustrial landscape pass by. Abbie's driving. Danny sits next to him. Occasionally, they stop and ask people as to the whereabouts of the Western Union office. Forrester takes pictures out of the back of the station wagon. Linda sits in the back seat holding on to her attache case.

FORRESTER

Is professor buyin' lunch today?

LINDA

I thought you were the one with the big bucks.

They begin bickering.

DANNY

OK everybody, to simplify matters, I'm gonna hold on to all the money. So c'mon, give me what you got.

Abbie reaches into his pocket and pulls out a crumbly dollar bill and seventysix cents in nickels and pennies. Danny gives him a funny look.

FORRESTER (to Abbie)

No credit card, uh?

From way in the back, Forrester hands Linda a wad of bills. Cactus hands over to Linda a five dollar bill and two quarters. Linda hands the money to Danny. Danny begins to count all the money, then looks at Linda, who pulls out a plastic wallet and hands Danny all of her money.

FORRESTER

What d'we have?

DANNY

One hundred eightyfive dollars and sixtythree cent.

FORRESTER

What the fuck! I thought professors had lots of money...

LINDA

That proves how ignorant you are.

FORRESTER

Who you callin' ignorant?

Forrester looks as if he'd like to take a swing at Linda. Abbie, amused by the conversation, begins driving recklessly. A police car is stopped by the traffic light.

DANNY

OK, cool it!

30. EXT. WESTERN UNION OFFICE. EVENING.

In the foreground is a telephone booth. Behind it, on the street, the station wagon, and behind the Western Union office.

LINDA (from inside the car)
Where'd he go now?

FORRESTER

His agent cabled him money from New York. Probably a couple of grand. Now we can stay in a motel, eat well, fix the car, get new tires... As Forrester lists all the great things they can do with the money, Danny comes storming out of the building and heads straight for the phone booth. He looks really angry. Danny inserts a quarter into the phone and dials Jake's number.

OPERATOR (o.s.)

Please deposit three dollars and twenty five cents for the first three minutes.

Danny curses, reaches into his pocket, pulls out all the change he has and deposits the money. He has a nickel left over. Jake's phone rings. The answering machine comes on. Finally the beep.

DANNY

Goddamit Jake. I hate your fuckin' machine..

JAKE (o.s.)

Danny? I was sleeping. Didya get the money?

DANNY

Jake you fuckin' douchebag... I asked you for money and you sent me a hundred bucks. I'm out here in fuckin' Akron on my way to a fuckin' hell of a story and you send me a hundred bucks...

JAKE (o.s.)

So this is like a thank you call ... what's the problem?

DANNY

The problem? The problem! The problem is that a hundred bucks ain't enough. That's the problem.

JAKE (o.s.)

I'm an agent Danny, not a bank. I get ten percent of what you earn. When you earn nothing I get ten percent of nothin'. How can I get an advance when you haven't wrote a page in four fuckin' years? Why d'ya think I came to look for you after all that time?

DANNY

Well. That's nice Jake. But what the hell am I supposed to do?

JAKE (o.s.)

I don't know.

DANNY

Thanks for nothing Jake.

JAKE (o.s.)

Listen Danny, wait a minute ... gimme a call me in a couple of days. I'll try to scare up some more dough...

The recorded operator interrupts the conversation.

OPERATOR (o.s.)

Please deposit one dollar and twenty cents for an additional two minutes...

Danny looks ay the nickel in his hand. He finally realizes he's on his own.

OPERATOR (o.s.)

Hello? Hello?

Danny puts the phone back in the cradle. He gets in the car.
Forrester drives away. The phone rings. And rings.

31.EXT.HOUSE.EVENING.

The station wagon is parked outside a small plain house on a side street in Akron. Danny comes out of the car and heads for the house, which has a few lights on. He rings the bell. Nothing. He rings again.

CUT TO

Inside the car.

FORRESTER

What's he doin'?

LINDA

What's it look like, you ignorant? He's ringing a doorbell.

Cactus and Abbie laugh. Forrester looks at her like he's gonna smack her upside her head, then a sarcastic grin breaks across his face.

LINDA (to Forrester)

You know, you should smile more. You got great teeth.

CUT TO

Finally, the door opens and a beautiful WOMAN stands there. Before any words are exchanged there's a "look" that passes between Danny and this woman. It's a quick "look", but makes both uncomfortable.

WOMAN

Hello.

DANNY

... hi... uh...

WOMAN

What can I do for you?

DANNY

Yeah... I'm... I'm looking for Lai and Peng.

WOMAN

They don't live here anymore.

Danny is surprised. The woman has a serious Italian accent, but there's no hesitation in her voice.

DANNY

Oh... well... I'm Danny.

WOMAN (change in tone)

Danny? You mean their Danny?

DANNY (smiling)

I guess so...yeah, their Danny.

She is evidently excited to meet him.

WOMAN

...please, come. Come inside.

She opens the door wide. Danny steps in.

32.INT.ANGELA'S HOUSE.NIGHT.

They sit at the table.

ANGELA

What a surprise! I heard so much about you from Lai and Peng I almost feel like I know you...I love your book...the book about Lai and Peng... oh, excuse me... my name is Angela. I'm Italian... Danny looks at her as if to say "really?!"

ANGELA

I moved here a few weeks before they went to live in New Orleans...

DANNY

New Orleans?

Danny is puzzled.

ANGELA

Yes. They didn't tell you? You like a glass of wine? What are you doing in Akron?

She's already in the kitchen pouring him a glass of wine. She pours herself one too. Danny is astonished by her energy. She gives him the glass and looks at him.

DANNY

I'm on my way to California.

ANGELA

Where in California?

DANNY

Death Valley.

ANGELA

That's in the desert, right? (Danny nods) I would love to see it.

DANNY

Tell me... why they moved to New Orleans?

ANGELA

There are no Vietnamese in Akron.

DANNY

I see. When was that?

ANGELA

A month and a half ago. (pause) I only met them for a very little time, but I liked them. They taught a lot about me this place. They like America, you know, but they felt lonely here...

DANNY

Lonely, hmm?

ANGELA

Yes, Akron is such a ... dead end. I'm ready to leave myself.

DANNY

Yeah, I can understand that...

Danny sighs and gazes off.

ANGELA

You look like... how do you say... it's not over for you. Are you still in love with them?

Danny is made uncomfortable by the question, but answers anyway.

DANNY

It's been a long time now (pause, hesitant)...it's just that... I still feel responsible for what's happened to them...

Just then Angela looks at the window. A puzzled expression on her

face. Danny turns as well. Abbie is standing at the window, peeping through the glass.

DANNY

Oh, shit... I forgot...

ANGELA

You know him?

DANNY

Yes. Uh... he...they're the people I'm traveling with...

Cactus appears with Abbie at the window.

ANGELA

Tell them to come in! It's so exciting to have guests when you don't expect them. C'mon, I'll make you supper!

DANNY

Please don't go to any trouble.

ANGELA

Trouble? This is a big fun for me. You know, I'm a stranger here myself too.

33.INT.ANGELA'S HOUSE.LATER.

Danny and his extended family sit around Angela's table eating and drinking. Cactus is lost in thoughts. Abbie's laughing at the jokes and not saying much. Forrester is the life of the party both he and Linda have drunk too much. Angela is having a ball. She keeps pouring wine and excitedly listens to their bizarre conversation. Every once in a while she asks Danny for explanations. Linda is displaying a series of pictures. They represent manmade rock formations.

LINDA

... they are using the same signs the Indians used to communicate in the desert...that's what Rhonda says in that letter!

CACTUS (solemn)

You should ask Abbie, he's an Indian.

FORRESTER (very drunk)

Sure. And I'm John Wayne...

Everybody laughs, but Cactus, who drifts back in her mind. Abbie can't stop laughing.

34.INT.ANGELA'S HOUSE.LATER.

Cactus is sleeping in her sleeping bag but Danny's headphones are still on her head. Abbie's on the couch. Angela is heading up the stairs. She passes a room with twin beds. Forrester's sleeping on one and Linda's sleeping on the other. She goes into another room. The balcony window is open. Danny's outside, sitting and staring at the stars.

ANGELA

Can I sit here with you?

DANNY

Sure. I was just...checking out the Akron sky...

ANGELA

I know. You can't sleep with all this memories in the house.

DANNY (smiling)

It's like the end of a road, y'know. You figure out where you are, where you're goin' and then take a new one.

Angela nods.

DANNY

And you ...how did you end up here?

ANGELA

Well...I was frustrated in Italy... a big part of my generation is. There's very little hope for the future there, people are very cynical. It seems like things never change ... (pauses, smiles) I guess it's the same in other places too, but I didn't like to sit there and moan about it... so after after I finished studying ... I was unemployed ...I saw that Goodyear was looking for Italian translators to be trained here and (smiles)... I don't give a fuck about my job, but America ... I really wanted to see if it. It's so different from where I come from, but it was the only place I could dream of going.

DANNY

Do you like it so far?

ANGELA

I don't know. I have been here only two months... and always in Akron ... Angela smiles, she's really beautiful under the pale light of the night.

ANGELA

That hole Linda talk about. Is it real?

DANNY

We're going there to find out.

ANGELA

But it is so strange.

DANNY

No less than Akron...

ANGELA

What?

DANNY

Never mind. Angela thinks for a second. Then comes closer to him. Danny looks at her as if he's going to kiss her.

ANGELA (resolute)

I'm coming with you.

Danny looks away.

DANNY

You're right. I can't sleep.

35.INT.ANGELA'S HOUSE.MORNING.

Breakfast is being eaten around the dining room table. Abbie, Forrester, Cactus and Linda are quiet. Everybody's a little hungover from the night before. Angela comes downstairs. She's holding a pack of clean clothes.

ANGELA

Linda this is for you. I'm sure it fits.

Linda doesn't know if she should be thankful or insulted, but she goes upstairs anyway to try on the clothes.

FORRESTER (to himself)

I slept in the same room with her...

Only Danny seems uptight. Something's bothering him. Angela sits next to him.

ANGELA

So?

DANNY

So what?

ANGELA

When are we leaving?

DANNY

We leave Angela, not you. Not with us.

Everybody's a little surprised by Danny's answer.

ANGELA

Look. I'm gonna go anyway, but I'd like to do it with people like you. I'm not gonna be a problem ...

DANNY

Take a Greyhound. We ain't a package tour.

ANGELA

I don't want to be a tourist.

DANNY

I said no.

Danny's nasty remarks leave the group embarrassed. Angela gets up and leaves the table.

CACTUS

Oh come on Danny!

FORRESTER

C'mon buddy, give the chick a fucking break...

Danny's in a funk. He slams his coffee cup on the table.

DANNY

We're leaving in five minutes!

Everybody moans and groans, but stands up anyway to say goodbye to Angela. They don't know what to say to her. She's furious. She grabs a couple of bottles of wine from the cupboard.

ANGELA (to Forrester)

Here... this is for you.

She gets a bunch of Italian rock cassettes and puts them in Cactus' hands. Cactus is speechless.

ABBIE

And this is for you Abbie.

Abbie takes the sweatshirt she's offering him. On the front it says, "Goodyear, Akron, Ohio".

ABBIE

This is like Christmas, man.

Finally, Angela turns to Danny.

ANGELA

Here. I was keeping them in the house for the right occasion... I guess that's what you really came here for, right?

She pulls out an envelope from her bag. She gives it to him. He opens it. Inside are several hundred dollar bills. Everybody's eyes bug out.

DANNY (uneasy)

Thanks, but I can't accept it.

He gives her back the money. Gets up and heads for the door. At that moment, Linda comes down the stairs. The clothes have transformed her. She's let her hair down and brushed it out. She's almost pretty. Abbie lets out a whistle. Forrester can't believe his eyes...

FORRESTER (to himself)

I slept in the same room with her...?

DANNY

C'mon everybody. Let's go!

ANGELA (to Danny)

I hope to see you again. Figlio di puttana. She runs upstairs to her room. Everybody sees her leaving, not knowing what to say. Danny leaves the house.

36.EXT.ANGELA'S HOUSE.MORNING.

Danny gets behind the wheel of the station wagon. Silently the others get in the car. But they are not speaking to Danny. They're all in a funk. They slam doors. They hate him.

DANNY

What the fuck's the matter with you morons? They all give him a dirty look.

DANNY

Look! There's a serious reason why we're going... in case you forgot.

FORRESTER

You know Danny, I'd like to spit in your eye right now. I just realized how much you've changed. I remember you used to know how to have fun, and be serious. (pauses) Fuck you Danny!

Danny turns the car and floors the gas pedal. The car swerves onto the street as Danny hits the brakes. He opens the door and walks back to Angela's house without saying a word.

FORRESTER (yelling)

Where you goin'?

DANNY

I forgot something.

The car's in the middle of the street. Other cars honk and drive around it. Danny goes into Angela's house. He comes out a few seconds later with Angela in tow. Danny gets behind the wheel. Abbie holds the passenger door open as he lets Angela sit between Danny and him. The door closes and the car takes off.

37.INT.STATION WAGON.DAY.

Through the windshield appears the road sign that says "South to Columbus". As they pass various towns with names such as London and Vienna , it seems like the music on the radio is speeding them faster

than ever towards their final destination. The landscape becomes gradually less industrial and depressive. Fields, farms, small towns all identical to each other. The Midwest. The heartbeat of America. The station wagon passes a sign that says, "You're leaving the State of Ohio. Welcome to Indiana" FORRESTER (o.s.)

Let's stop and eat.

ANGELA (o.s.)

Good idea. I need a bathroom.

38.INT.STATION WAGON.DAY.

As they drive to Indianapolis, the configuration is that Abbie's driving. Cactus lies on the front seat, her legs hanging out the window. Forrester is still taking pictures. He's in the back seat with Linda. In the far back seat Angela and Danny lie down next to each other. As they talk, there are three different conversations, one in each seat. It's as if there's an imaginary screen between each seat.

ANGELA

Where are you from Danny?

DANNY

Out west. Small town called Faith, South Dakota.

ANGELA

You don't like New York?

DANNY

Why?

ANGELA

Because you're going away.

DANNY

I guess you're right.(laughs) Americans are like sharks, y'know. They gotta keep moving or they die. New York... it's just a place.

ANGELA

So you had to leave?

DANNY

When Cactus came to my loft, I saw in her something I hadn't seen in a long time...

ANGELA

What?

DANNY

Myself...Myself before I stopped moving.

CUT TO

LINDA

... did you know Cactus' father?

FORRESTER

No. I don't think even Rhonda knew who he was...

LINDA

What exactly happened to her?

FORRESTER

Well, she was arrested in 1973 for robbing a store. She and a few others stole guns and ammunitions because they were planning to

spring Manson. Cactus was sent to a foster family in New Hampshire. When Rhonda was released in '76, she disappeared ... just like that (pause) then Cactus found the letters. Her foster parents had been hiding them for more than ten years...

LINDA

Were you surprised?

FORRESTER

(pause) No. I knew it was coming back. What goes around comes around ... or somethin' like that... (laughs)

CUT TO CACTUS (to Abbie)

What's your name?

ABBIE

Abbie.

CACTUS

I know ... didn't your mother give you an Indian name?

ABBIE

Yes.

CACTUS

What is it?

ABBIE

John.

He smiles at Cactus and she at him.

39.EXT.DINER.LATE AFTERNOON.

They're all eating dinner. Danny's writing in his notebook. He notices that Linda is always clutching her attache case. Linda is reading Rhonda's letters, sitting alone with Angela in a seat box.

VOICE (v.o.)

"... the fault runs right through Death Valley and is shaped like a triangle. And at the center of the triangle, there's this pool which goes down to the center of the earth, where the aware lives forever..."

The waitress comes with the check. Angela is observing Linda.

ANGELA (to Linda)

Do you like the clothes I gave you?

Linda looks at herself. She's wearing Angela's "gift".

LINDA

Yes, they're nice. But I'm not really into those kinds of things.

ANGELA

You mean you don't want to be attractive?

LINDA

No. I didn't say that. But I don't respect men enough to go out of my way to please them...

Angela thinks about it.

ANGELA

I know. They have no imagination.

LINDA

Well, Danny has...

ANGELA (sarcastic)

The famous writer? Not even him. Let me show you.

Angela winks at her, then slips out of the box and joins Danny at his seat. He's busy writing and doesn't seem ready to chat. She acts very sweet and flirty.

ANGELA

Danny?

DANNY (still looking down)

What?

ANGELA

When we go to Indianapolis I would like to see race track five thousands.

DANNY

There's no racing at night, Angela.

40.EXT.INDIANAPOLIS 500.NIGHT.

The lights are on, the station wagon is going round and round.

ANGELA (o.s.)

This is great! Who said there was no racing at night?

The car goes round and round. Probably the slowest car to ever run the track. Then it stops. Inside, Danny and Angela are kissing passionately.

41 EXT.ROUTE 70.DAYBREAK/MORNING.

The station wagon passes the following towns: Eminence, Indiana...

LINDA (o.s.)

I have to go to the bathroom...

... Manhattan, Indiana...

ANGELA (o.s.)

Look Danny, you're back home!

... St. Louis, Missouri...

FORRESTER (o.s.)

I'm starving. Let's stop...

42.EXT.ST.LOUIS, MISSOURI.LATE AFTERNOON.

The car is up on a lift in a service station. The service station attendant is looking it over. Angela, Abbie, Linda and Cactus are standing by. Angela comes next to Cactus.

ANGELA

Do you want to come with me to see the Mississippi?

Cactus follows her without a word.

43.EXT.ST.LOUIS, MISSOURI.LATE AFTERNOON.

Forrester and Danny are walking through downtown St. Louis.

Forrester is taking pictures of people.

DANNY

Whaddaya doin'?

FORRESTER

Taking pictures, what else? This is like the old times!

DANNY

This isn't like the old times Forrester! It ain't your fuckin' nostalgia...

FORRESTER

Whaddya mean?

DANNY

This is now. Then was then. Y'understand?

FORRESTER

I didn'y say this is then! I said this is like then!

DANNY

Well, it's not. Then is in your head.

They come to a corner. Across the street a young punky GIRL is aggressively panhandling from passerbys. As they wait for the light to change and cross the street, they see that a COP is confronting the girl.

COP

Come here!

GIRL

Kiss my ass!

The cop grabs her by the hair and drags her to the side of a building. The girl is cursing him. Danny runs across the street. Forrester following a short distance behind. The officer is about to arrest the girl, she's kicking at him.

DANNY

Slappy! Slappy! Slappy!

The cop turns, sees Danny. The girl also stops and looks at Danny.

DANNY

Slappy I told you not to leavethe house!

COP

You know this girl?

DANNY

Yes officer, I apologize for her behaviour, she's my daughter. My name's Joe Robinson...

He strikes his hand out to shake the cop's hand, the cop does this. The girl can't believe her eyes. Neither does Forrester. The cop is not sure.

COP

Why is she panhandlin'?

Danny puts his arm around the cop's shoulder.

DANNY

Officer, that's what kids do these days. They think it's "cool" to panhandle. Kids! Whaddya gonna do? One day it's hula hoop, one day it's panhandling.

The cop is not sure whether to swallow this bullshit.

COP (to girl)

What's your name?

GIRL

Sonora.

COP

Sonora what?

GIRL

Sonora West.

The cop looks at Danny, like he's just caught him with his pants down. The girl gives Danny a funny look, like "ha ha dogooder, get out of this one!"

DANNY

Stepfather. I'm her stepfather. She takes after her mother. Women... can't live with them, can't live without them.

COP

Is he your stepfather?

The girl thinks about this for a minute. She gives Danny the once over. Torturing him. They could both land in a police station.

SONORA

Yeah. I guess so.

The cop finally falls for it.

COP

OK, but get her out of here. I see her on the street one more time, I'm gonna have to lock her up.

DANNY

Thank you officer! C'mon Slappy.

Danny leads her away by grabbing her hair.

SONORA

Ow! Let go!

The cop sees this and smiles. Danny smiles back at him.

DANNY (loud)

Wait till I get you home!

They're crossing back across the street.

SONORA (screaming)

What home? Whatta ya talkin' 'bout?

DANNY (lowers his voice)

Shhh! Wanna get thrown in jail?

SONORA (scrappy)

What's it to you? What're you the Lone Ranger or somethin'?

DANNY

Yeah.

Forrester comes up behind them, trying to take her picture.

SONORA (sticking out her tongue)

Who's this? Tonto?44.INT.STATION WAGON.LATE AFTERNOON.

Forrester's driving. Next to him SONORA and next to her Cactus.

Behind them Danny and Angela and in the far back Abbie and Linda.

Linda's holding her attache case, staring out the window blankly.

Abbie's trying to catch forty winks under a construction worker's

safety helmet. Danny and Angela are trying to cozy up and maybe catch

a few winks. But all peace in the (now) crowded station wagon is

nearly impossible because of the presence of Sonora, who is so

hyperactive that her energy is almost uncontainable within the

station wagon. From this time on, the sense of claustrophobia inside

the wagon is intense.

ANGELA

... but aren't your mother and father be missing you?

SONORA

Nah! The only way they could ever miss me is if they sent me out for a sixpack of Buds. Besides I haven't seen my parents in almost three years.

Sonora's traveling belongings consist of a bag full of tapes, no walkman and no clothing. She's wearing a ripped Janis Joplin tshirt, torn jeans and black hightops. The color of her hair is an amalgam of several different colors, most of them variations of peroxide gone bad. She's punky, highspirited and loony. By contrast, Cactus is a wallflower.

FORRESTER

So you like Janis...

SONORA

You bet.

FORRESTER

Kind of old fashioned for your age...

SONORA

Old fashioned is you, Tonto! This puts a sudden silence in the car.

DANNY

You're a real wise ass, aren't you Slappy?

SONORA

Yeah, next to you morons... how come you call me Slappy? My name's Sonora.

DANNY

Cause everytime you open your mouth I feel like slapping you.

SONORA

Oh yeah? Don't try it, don't even think about it, Dad! Just drop me off in Joplin and I'll be out of your hair. Fuckin' hippies!

DANNY (smiling)

Let's turn here Forrester, maybe we can find a room for the night. The sign on the road reads: "Lebanon".

45.INT.MOTEL ROOM.NIGHT.

In room number five, Angela is lying on the bed. Reading Rhonda's letters. Completely fascinated by her lecture.

VOICE (v.o.)

"... then all of sudden people stopped dropping acid. Everyone went back to the plastic city, went back to their jobs, their egos got fat again. We're the only people who stuck with it. We just stepped out"

...

She's so caught up in the letters that she doesn't even notice Abbie and Forrester walking in the room to say goodnight. Forrester takes a picture of her. They leave in silence.46.INT.MOTEL ROOM.NIGHT.

In room number four, Sonora is sitting on the bed with her back to the wall. Linda has taken her shoes off, but is otherwise fully clothed, looking at her maps. She looks at Sonora from the corner of her eye. Her attache case is close by her side. Cactus has taken a shower, she's drying her hair with a towel, otherwise she is completely naked and completely unselfconscious about it.

SONORA

You guys gonna sleep like that? You look like the naked and the dead. Cactus and Linda look at each other. Sonora picks up a drinking glass, puts it to the wall and puts her ear up to the glass. Both Cactus and Linda give her a funny look.

CUT TO

Back in room five. Angela's trying to read the letters, but Danny, who's just out of the shower, doesn't let her. He's in a playful mood. He's listening on the walkman to some of Angela's Italian rock tapes: Franti, CCCP, Diaframma...

DANNY (sarcastic)

Don't you have real rock'n'roll there? You know, Hendrix, The Doors... Angela doesn't take her eyes from the pages.

ANGELA (sighs)

Of course.

DANNY (teasing her)

How do you say rock'n'roll in Italian?

ANGELA

Rock'n'roll.

DANNY

You mean you don't have a word for it?

ANGELA

No. We call it like you do.

DANNY

Shit, I never thought 'bout it. Italian rock'n'roll. Pizza rock! She kicks him, friendly enough to send him off the bed. Danny, still laughing, crawls back on it.

DANNY

C'mon, I'm sorry...how do you say "I apologize" in Italian... or don't you have a word for that either?

ANGELA (pushing the letters away)

You say: chiedo scusa, sono una testa di cazzo.

DANNY

Hey, wait a minute, there're too many words there.

ANGELA

It means: I apologize, I will not do it again.

Danny is skeptical, but tries to repeat "chiedo scusa, sono una testa di cazzo". Angela, amused and satisfied, rolls over and kisses him.

ANGELA

It is enough. I believe you.

She keeps kissing him, more and more passionately. Danny responds in kind. They slide under the covers.

CUT TO

Back next door.

SONORA (still listening)

Hey you guys! C'mere! Listen to this!

Cactus and Linda are fast asleep.

47.INT.STATION WAGON.MORNING.

The station wagon is heading West through the Ozark. A new landscape,

green mountains, lakes and streams, mark a new day in the life of the improvised "family".

SONORA (o.s.)

You guys really weird, y'know, how the hell you expect to find Cactus' mom in a hole?

A sign says that Joplin is the next exit.

FORRESTER

Isn't this your exit, Sonora?

SONORA

Nah! Never said that. Amarillo. That's where I'm going.

LINDA

Could we stop anyway? I need to use the ladies room...

48. EXT. LAKE OF THE CHEROKEES. DAY.

The group, all but Linda, is jumping onto the lake. Swimming, having fun. Linda sits on the bank of the lake. Fully clothed. Lost in her maps and papers. Her attache case close by her side. Forrester and Danny are in the water.

DANNY

Have you noticed how our professor friend over there never lets that briefcase out of her sight?

FORRESTER

Yeah, I have.

DANNY

What d'you make of it?

FORRESTER

I dunno ... could be nothing.

In the distance they see Sonora approaching Linda.

SONORA

Why don't you jump in the lake with us?

LINDA

I'm too busy and besides I didn't want to stop here...

SONORA

Oh, don't be such a tight ass. One day you're gonna wake up and find out you're dead.

LINDA

That doesn't make any sense...

SONORA

Well, neither do you...

Sonora's remark hurts Linda. She stops working. Sonora shrugs and runs back into the lake. Forrester comes to sit next to Linda. They don't talk but smile at each other. Danny, who's still in the water, notices it. Angela comes to talk to him. She's all excited.

ANGELA

I want to go to Frontier City. Abbie said it's like an old western town...

Danny shakes his head.

DANNY

I just hope once we're in California you ain't gonna ask me to see

Disneyland..

Angela jumps on him. They fall in the water, playing.

49.INT.CAR.DAY.

The car is headed toward Frontier City, USA. The sign says "Come and see the best of the Old West". The engine doesn't sound very good. Forrester's sleeping between Linda and Angela. Sonora and Cactus are way in the back.

SONORA

So who's this Manson guy?

Cactus doesn't answer.

SONORA

A friend of Danny's?

CACTUS

No.

SONORA

I wish you'd stop talking so much, you're making me nervous. Cactus smiles hesitantly. Sonora takes the headphones from Cactus' ears and puts them on. She listens for a few seconds, shrugs, takes out the tape and puts in one from her own bag. Weird noises are coming from the engine. Abbie's driving, he looks over to Danny, giving him a look like this car isn't gonna make it much further. Danny tells him to stop. On the side of the road, there's a phone booth.

50.EXT.ABANDONED FARM.NIGHT.

The group is sleeping next to the barn of a farm. Even if the farm looks still fairly new, there's no one around. Not even the repo men... Tractors and plows lie still in the peace of the countryside. Danny lies fairly drunk on top of a chicken coop and observes his new "family". Abbie's asleep in the front seat of the station wagon. Linda, Forrester and Cactus are sleeping in the barn on piles of hay. Danny turns around and sees Angela looking at him. Only Sonora is nowhere to be seen.

ANGELA (a little drunk)

I couldn't believe Frontier City... what a disgusting place... so commercial, fake..

DANNY

What did you expect Angela? This is the land of opportunity. Every opportunity is good to make a buck out of it.

ANGELA

Yeah, but not everybody's like that. You, all of you, you're different..

DANNY

Really? (laughs)

Danny swigs from the bottle. Angela looks straight at him.

ANGELA

Do you really believe in this hole, Danny?

DANNY

Do I?... I believe in looking for the hole..

Just then they hear a thud above their heads. They both turn and look up. On the roof, stripped naked except for the underwear, Sonora is playing air guitar and listening to some hardcore punk music on her headphones. She's a strange apparition by the moonlight. Like a crazed coyote baying at the moon.

51.EXT.ROUTE 40.DAY.

The station wagon's on its last legs. The engine's making funny sounds. Ominous black clouds emanate from the exhaust pipes. But the wagon is still moving, barely.

52.EXT.ROUTE 40.DAY.

The car is parked by the side of the highway. The front hood is up. Smoke is pouring out of it. Cars speed along the highway. Abbie and Forrester have got their heads stuck under the hood, trying to figure out what's wrong with the car. Cactus, Angela and Linda sit by the side of the road. Danny's pacing trying to figure out what to do.

SONORA

Well, I guess this is where we part company, folks. Can't say it hasn't been a pleasure.

Everybody looks at her, basically happy to get rid of her.

SONORA

Have a nice life!

She walks a little ways down, and starts to hitch. Nobody's stopping. Danny walks near to where she's standing.

SONORA

Got somethin' to say? Say it.

DANNY (smiles at her)

I was gonna give you a piece of advice, but I just remembered myself at your age... good luck. See ya.

Danny turns to walk away.

SONORA

Hey cowboy!

Danny stops and turns, Sonora walks to him. SONORA

You think you're so smart. Big shot writer! Well if you're so smart, how come you're broke in a beat up car stuck in nowhere with a bunch of losers?

Danny looks around, she's got a point. He goes back to the others. Sonora walks backwards down the road, her thumb stuck in the air. A van stops and she gets in.

53.EXT.ROUTE 40.LATER.

Some time has passed. They've given up trying to fix the car, although Abbie's still cleaning the windows and taking off the license plates. Cactus is depressed. Forrester's trying to console her, but he's not very convincing.

FORRESTER

... we'll make it... don't worry, Cactus...
Danny's sitting a short distance away, Angela beside him.

ANGELA

It is over, isn't it?

DANNY (sarcastic)

A dream isn't over until you wake up.

ANGELA

What?

DANNY

I read that somewhere.

ANGELA

In a fortune cookie?

They both laugh.

DANNY

Amarillo isn't far away, and if we can make it there maybe I can get some money from Jake... Linda's sitting by herself, holding onto her attache case. Danny walks over to her.

DANNY

How do you feel?

LINDA

It's a drag.

DANNY

I know. What's in the case, Linda?

LINDA (nervous)

My papers... what are we gonna do? I don't like this, I don't like it one bit...

DANNY (unperturbed)

Nobody does.

LINDA

You said you had it together... I have my work to finish in Death Valley... did you forget about that?!

DANNY

I'm glad to hear that you have your priorities straight.
Forrester walks over to where they are.

FORRESTER

Cactus is losing it...

DANNY

Everybody's shook up... I'll go talk to her.

FORRESTER

Whaddaya gonna tell her?

Danny starts to walk away. He answers without even slightly turning his head.

DANNY

I dunno.

Forrester sighs and looks at Linda. She smiles at him. Danny reaches Cactus. A moment passes. Cars zoom by on the highway. The Texas sun is high in the sky.

CACTUS

How much money do we have left?

DANNY

Not much.

CACTUS

We goin' back?

DANNY

No. (pauses) There's not enough money to go back... and we've come too far. Do you wanna go back?

Cactus looks at him funny.

CACTUS

No. I want to find Rhonda even if I have to walk...

CUT TO

Forrester is sitting down next to Linda. He looks straight in front of himself, uneasy.

FORRESTER

I saw what's in your case yesterday.

Linda holds her breath, but Forrester doesn't continue.

LINDA

And...

FORRESTER

I'm not gonna talk if that's what you wanna know. (pause) But I'd like to understand what's going on...

Linda is relieved and surprised by Forrester's words.

LINDA

I was wrong about you Forrester. You got imagination.

CUT TO

DANNY

You should know something about me. I never give up what I start...

CACTUS

That's what Forrester said.

DANNY

You know my book about the boat people?

Cactus nods.

DANNY

I didn't go to Thailand to write it. I went there to see with my eyes. I wanted to be there... and I fell in love with these two girls... Lai and Peng... and I decided to bring them over here.

In the distance Forrester and Linda continue talking.

DANNY

So I bought them two phoney passports and I went to the airport. The cop looked at the papers, smiled at me and arrested the girls. I was fucked, y'know. The American consulate didn't want to help me because they were supposed to go to the refugees camps. The Thais wanted money and I didn't have a fuckin' cent... but the nicest sonofabitch in the whole wide world just happened to arrive that day in Bangkok with enough money to get them out ... good old Eagle Eye...

CACTUS

He didn't tell me that...

DANNY

What I'm trying to say is ... nothin' is ever as easy as you figure it

out to be and a lot of it is just plainluck...

CACTUS

In her letters my mother talks about fate, a lot...
Linda approaches them. She's nervously holding her attache case,
looking for words.

LINDA

I'm sorry for before... I didn't mean to... it's only that I've been
looking for this hole for so long... and always... anyway, I have
something...

Just then a pickup truck pulls over by where the car is stuck. A
young boy of about twenty is driving it. The truck kicks up dust.
When the dust clears, Sonora appears.

SONORA

Hey suckers! Enjoying yourselves? I'm back!

ANGELA

Sonora! Look Danny, it's Sonora.

DANNY

I see.

FORRESTER

Girl's like a bad check, keeps bouncing back.

SONORA

This is Scott. We're gonna get married and have three children, two
boys and a girl. We're gonna call them Harry, Larry and Lu Ann ... but
before then we're gonna give you guys a ride to this hole. So
whaddaya say?

Everybody looks at everybody. What can they say?

54.INT.PICKUP TRUCK.EVENING.

The pickup truck is driven by SCOTT. He is a Texas local, dressed in
a checked denim shirt, with long blonde hair. Next to him sits
Sonora, then Angela and next to the window Danny. The pickup truck's
seat is wide and the four people fit in not too uncomfortably. Scott
definitely likes to talk. And drink. A carpet of beer bottles on the
floor of the cab.

SCOTT

... so I said to myself, Scottie, ya dig this chick, ya gotta do
somethin' 'bout it... so I walked out of the bar and I figured you guys
are six and with the two of us a car ain't enough. But a truck will
do just fine..

ANGELA

You stole it?

SCOTT

Sure I did, mam. A truck will do just fine...

He laughs at his boast. Sonora too.

DANNY

Maybe you should have robbed a bank on the way over...

SONORA

Why? Don't you believe him?

DANNY (sarcastic)

Sure I do, mam...

55.EXT.ROUTE 40.NIGHT.

The truck goes through Wildorado, Texas. Now the road gets lonelier, straighter. As they head into the night, they are also coming into the real west. In the open back are Forrester, Linda, Cactus and Abbie. Everyone looks haggard and drawn. Only Abbie doesn't seem to mind the ride. He's playing a sweet and sad, dirgelike tune on the harp. It's eerie, it chills to the bone. His eyes sparkle, his Indian blood is racing with the moon. A sign says: "Welcome to New Mexico".

56.EXT.TUCUMCARI,NEW MEXICO.NIGHT.

The pickup truck pulls into a cheap motel and everybody gets out of the truck. Two old Indians sit in front of the entrance. As Abbie walks by, they greet him in Apache language. Everybody turns impressed with Abbie: he's a real Indian.

57.INT.MOTEL ROOM.NIGHT/DAWN.

Everybody's sleeping in the same room. Lovingly in each other's arms, Sonora and Scott are in one twin bed. Forrester's snoring in the other. Angela and Danny are sleeping in a sleeping bag on the floor. Cactus is sleeping on a chair. She's curled up, it's obvious that she's dreaming, moaning, arguing in her sleep. It's a nightmare. Visions of Death Valley dissolve over and over. Suddenly she's awake. She's sweating. She stumbles toward the bathroom. The bathroom door is closed, but a light shines from under the door. Cactus opens the door. She's surprised to discover Linda sitting crosslegged on the floor with a map of Death Valley, several of Rhonda's letters, pens, pencils, rulers, a calculator and a bottle of beer, on the floor in front of her. Linda is equally surprised, and sees that Cactus looks freakedout.

LINDA

You look terrible. You OK?

CACTUS (her voice is strange)

I... uh... I had a dream... uh, I was lost in the desert... but I'm not sure it was me... I have to drinkwater...

Cactus goes to the sink, turns on the tap and drinks, drinks, drinks for what seems like an eternity. Finally, she raises her head, satiated.

CACTUS

What are you doin'?

Linda is tired and excited at the same time.

LINDA

I think I've got it. I know where the hole is.

Her speech is a mixture of scientific coldness and unconcealed euphoria.

LINDA

It was all in your mother's letters ... all I had to do was to give a scientific explanation to it. . . I've been able to determine the approximate, within a quarter mile radius, location of the hole... Cactus is intrigued and bends down over the map.

LINDA

... actually it's fairly exact. Look, to put it simply, it comes down to the center of a triangle. See! Dry Mountain in the Saline Valley in the North. Devil's Hole to the East and Owlshhead Mountain to the South. That's the triangle. And the center is right here... (she points with her finger) Right in the middle of the Twenty Mule Team Canyon (euphoric)... maybe you should wake Danny up...

All excited Cactus goes back to the other room. She goes over to Danny and nudges him on the shoulder. He opens his eyes tentatively. She tries not to wake up Angela, who's entwined in Danny's arms.

CACTUS (whispering)

Danny! Danny, wake up!

Danny moans and groans and finally looks up.

DANNY

Shit! What time is it?

CACTUS

It's almost dawn.

DANNY

It's... too early. Wake me up after dawn...

CACTUS

Danny (she grabs him by the face) you gotta get up now!

DANNY

Why?

CACTUS

It's Linda. She's in the bathroom. She's found the hole.

DANNY

Well, that's good as anywhere to find the hole..

CACTUS

No Danny. The hole. The hole. (pause) C'mon Danny wake up!

Cactus kicks him, to no avail. Frustrated, she goes out the door.

Morning light is already filling up the sky.

58.EXT.MOTEL.EARLY DAWN.

Cactus comes out of the room. The pickup truck is parked right outside. She inhales a deep breath of air, stretches and yawns. The sky is the subtlest shade of deep purple black. From the East, the sun is warning its imminent arrival.

ABBIE

Mornin' Cactus.

Cactus is startled. She looks on the bed of the truck. Lying there on blankets is Abbie.

ABBIE

Come over here. Lie down next to me.

Without so much as a word, or a seconds hesitation, Cactus does this. They're both now lying on the bed of the truck, looking up at the sky. The colors change as the stars melt away to day.

ABBIE (o.s.)

When was the last time you seen so many stars? Listen to the sounds, Cactus... at first there's nothing... They listen. In the far off distance sounds of coyotes and roosters and the wind.

CACTUS (o.s.)

I had a dream Abbie.

ABBIE (o.s.)

I know, we had the same dream. All the Indians have it. We believe there's a hole in the desert from where all the tribes emerged one day. But because we've lost our way to the world below the earth, we live stranded in this land... One day our children will find the hole again and disappear into it...it will be a new beginning.

DANNY (o.s.)

A new beginning... that's what it is, Abbie?

Cactus stands up. The entire "family" is gathered behind Danny, who's standing near the truck. They're still half asleep, but somehow awakened to a new reality.

59.EXT.MOTEL.MORNING.

Danny goes into a phone booth. Everyone is waiting around, as hedrops in the coins and dials. They're a ragtag of true misfits; a dirty scruffy lot but somehow washed by the integrity of their "mission". Forrester stands outside the booth.

DANNY

... Jake! Have you got my messages? (pause) Did ya get the money? (pause) How much? Where? (pause) Needles? (pause) Yeah, yeah. The trip is only one part of the story. I'll let you know ... it's very important... let's say it's about the end of one world and the beginning of another! (pause) No, I'm not kidding! Just send the money, Jake! (pause) Yeah, I'll send you a postcard.

Danny hangs up the phone. Forrester has a big smile on his face as he turns to the others with his thumbs up.

60.EXT.ROUTE 23.DAY.

Just forty miles west of Albuquerque is the sign for the Enchanted Mesa. The landscape of the New Mexico highlands fills the screen with the meaning of why this place is called the Enchanted Mesa. Thick, stormy clouds surround the mountains, transforming the sunlight into an illusionary artificial reflector.

The pickup stops at the intersection. Danny and Forrester jump out of the back.

FORRESTER

What're we stopping here for?

Danny walks to the front window.

DANNY

Listen, Scott, we got serious business in...

SCOTT

Hey, c'mon, man! The little lady from Akron has never seen this part

of the world, how 'bout showin' her a little western hospitality... !

DANNY

Look! I appreciate your hospitality Scott, but we gotta move!

SCOTT

Hey buddy! You wanna go to this hole, right? I ain't sayin' we're not goin'. But the truck is mine and it goes where and when I say it goes!

Danny looks at Forrester. They look like they're gonna take out this little punk. Make dog food out of him.

ANGELA (from inside the truck)

Forget it Scott! Next time I will take a package tour!

CACTUS

C'mon Danny. What's the difference? The hole won't close if we're one day late...

Danny turns to Forrester and Linda, sighs, puts his hat on and jumps back in the truck.

61.INT.PICKUP TRUCK.MORNING.

The pickup is headed West on Route 40. It's going very fast, faster than the station wagon ever went. Inside the cab, Scott, Sonora, Angela and Danny are eating sandwiches. Through the back window we see the rest of the group. They're eating as well. Abbie is washing down his breakfast with Tequila. Every once in a while he passes the bottle to Scott over the window. Everyone is wearing sunglasses. Scott is still trying to impress the others...SCOTT

... I dig this hole, y'know... shit man, no work, no parents, no cops... I dig it man, I'm gonna fly there!

SONORA

Beam me up Scottie! (laughing) Beam me up!
He takes a swig off his Tequila, burps and smiles.

SONORA (to Angela and Cactus)

Ain't he just the cutest thing you ever laid your eyes on?
Cactus smiles.

ANGELA (to Scott)

What do you do in Amarillo?

SCOTT

What?

ANGELA

You have a job?

SCOTT

Nah! I had one... janitor in the golf club... I got fired for pissing in the holes!

Scott and Sonora laugh again. They definitely have a similar sense of humor.

CUT TO

As the pickup speeds west on Route 40, we read the colorful names of the towns it passes: Thunderbird, Continental Divide, Defiance... The pickup truck is going much faster than the speed limit, passing the other vehicles as it goes. Scott's driving like a maniac. They are

all drinking, especially him.

Everybody seems to be giddy; exhilarated by the speed and the alcohol. Even Cactus is beginning to open up. Her hair is blowing in the wind, her smile turning to laughter. Her laughter's contagious like a winter flu. Abbie, Forrester and even Linda get into it. Their pent up emotions are finally liberated. It's as if somebody told a secret and hilarious joke. The speeding pickup hits bumps and they all bang and throttle into each other. Linda falls into Forrester's arms, for a split second they look like they're going to kiss. But they don't.

A sign in the distance reads: "Arizona", and in smaller letters beneath, "The 48th State".

62.EXT.PICKUP TRUCK.DAY.

In a blur of imagery, the Arizona landscape flashes by, as if the beauty of it was all too much. The landscape is tilted, alienated, estranged. America is turned upside down. We are entering the True West, the land of the magic and fantasy, the land of wisdom and excess. The land is beautiful, but our vision is warped. The road signs pass by at a hallucinatory speed: "Fort Courage Trading Post", "Painted Desert", "Petrified Forest"...

CUT TO

Back on Route 40 going West, Scott doesn't let up on the accelerator. It's as if his leadfoot is stuck on the floorboard. They pass a sign that says "Chief Geronimo Trading Post". The truck, doing 75 mph, passes straight through a red light...

CUT TO

The pickup keeps speeding down the highway. It passes a sign that says "Jackrabbit". The truck zips by an intersection without slowing down. The screech of several cars hitting the brakes.

63.INT.PICKUP.DAY.

The pickup is still going very fast. The euphoria is fading away.

ANGELA

Scott, please, slow down.

SCOTT What's matter baby? You scared?

(laughs)

Sonora and Angela are obviously frightened. Scott has gone over the edge.

SONORA

She's right Scottie! Slow down!

Forrester's pounding on the cab roof and window, his hair blowing in the wind. Scott doesn't pay any attention to him.

ANGELA (angry)

C'mon Danny, make him stop! I'm scared.

Sonora is beginning to pull on Scott's denim jacket.

SONORA

Scott! Scott! Whatsamatter with you?
Danny squints his eyes into the sun and whispers.

DANNY

The road to excess leads to the palace of wisdom...
Somehow Scott's heard this. He's turned in to Danny, but his foot's
still hammered to the floor.

SCOTT

Whats that? The road what?

DANNY

The road to excess leads to the palace of wisdom.
Forrester's now trying to grab Scott through the window. He's yelling
and cursing. Trying to grab him, but he can't reach that far without
falling out of the truck. Both Linda and Cactus are holding on to
Forrester's legs, trying to keep him from falling out.

SCOTT

I dig that... yeah, right! Say it again.
The truck speeds by the sign "Two Guns".

DANNYThe road to excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

SCOTT

The road to excess leads to the palace of wisdom... yeah... that's
awesome... you write that?
Forrester's banging on the cab harder than ever.

DANNY

Nope. William Blake wrote that.

SCOTT

You friends with this guy?

DANNY

Nope.

SCOTT

I'd sure like to meet him... sounds like a dude, man!

DANNY

Keep drivin' like this and you will.

In the distance, a state trooper car appears from a side road. It
starts following them. When she sees that, Linda starts hysterically
pounding on the roof of the cab and yelling at Scott to slow down.

SCOTT

Oh shit...

He reduces the speed as much as he can. The state trooper is getting
closer. Scott keeps looking in the rear view mirror.

DANNY

Turn there!

The truck hits a dirt road on the side of the highway and stops. The
state trooper approaches. They're all holding their breath. The
police car speeds by, ignoring them. A smile of relief appears on
Scott's face, as he gives the finger to the cop. Everybody jumps out
of the truck.

LINDA (yelling)You stupid little creep! You would've
fucked us all up!

FORRESTER

She's fuckin'right, you punk, you could've killed us all!
Forrester begins beating the shit out of Scott as everybody looks over in surprise and bewilderment. Danny immediately jumps in, trying to pull Forrester off of Scott. But Forrester's so angry at Scott, it's very difficult. Things are turning ugly.

SCOTT

Hey man! Get off me!

Sonora jumps into the fight to try to protect her boyfriend. She bites Forrester's leg.

FORRESTER

Ow!

ANGELA

This is stupid...

Danny finally succeeds, with the help of Abbie, to pull Forrester off of Scott. Abbie's pushing Scott away. Danny's moving Forrester away.

FORRESTER

Goddamit! Look at that! She bit right through the skin!

DANNY

Lookit you two! Forrester! Whatsamatter with you? What's got into you?!

Everybody stops. They look at Danny. There's some sort of craziness in his eyes. They're like glowing embers. It seems like the madness of the day has affected him.

DANNY

Look at us! Is this what we're about? Fighting amongst ourselves? Forrester did'ya already forget what it was like in jail? Inmates against inmates and the screws laughing at them! You should know better. I expect more from you.(pause) Look at yourselves.(pause) Look! (pause) Is this it? Is that why we drove three thousand miles? To beat the shit out of each other? (he pauses for an answer, there's none) I never asked any of you to come along. You asked me. And that's OK. There's plenty of room for everybody. And I don't want you to go now. We're like ... I don't know... like a family now ... and I wanna go to find this hole with my family! Yes! The hole.
He stops and takes Cactus by the hand.

DANNY

She came asking me to help her. All of you came along and said "yeah, let's go to this hole". Don't you understand? What else do we need to understand that something is calling us out there. That there's something out there that we have to find. We all think it's something different, but it's there! (pause) I know it sounds crazy, but I know I'm not scared of craziness. If you wanna step out, do it now. Go. I'm not gonna stop you. Just remember what Abbie said... "a new beginning"...

He repeats Abbie's words with a slight shudder in his voice.

CUT TO

As cars speed West on the highway, darkness has fallen, and eight people are standing along the shoulder of Route 40, motionless as if they've just landed in a new world.

64.EXT.PICKUP.EVENING.

The pickup is approaching Flagstaff, Arizona. It is traveling quite reasonably. Abbie's at the wheel. Scott's in the back. The devil is out of him. The night air has cooled him off. Sonora has one arm around Scott's shoulders. Angela sits between Sonora and Danny. They're reading a map. Angela holds a flashlight.

SONORA

So where do we stay?

DANNY (pointing to the map)

Right here. Mormon Lake Motel. No beds, no rooms, no charge... ain't you dying Sonora to sleep under the stars again?

Sonora smiles.

SONORA

You ain't nothin' but a hippie...

Danny and Angela laugh.

65.EXT.LAKE.NIGHT.

Mormon Lake lit by the stars and the moon. Beautiful, serene, seven thousand feet above sea level. Its surface a black mirror to the night. The Coconino Forest encircling it like a halo. Around a campfire, the "family", exhausted from their travels and travails, sleeps in sleeping bags and blankets. Linda's bandaging Forrester's leg.

FORRESTER

How does it look?

LINDA (kidding)

You'll live.

Sonora and Scott are watching them as Linda finishes her operation.

SCOTT (mumbling, to Forrester)

Well... I'm... y'know... Sonora can't help but laughing.

FORRESTER

That's OK... just give me the bottle before it's all gone...

They give the almost empty bottle of Tequila. Meanwhile Cactus has come to where Forrester is.

CACTUS (low)

Hi.

FORRESTER (low)

HI.

CACTUS

How are you feeling?

FORRESTER

Linda says I'll live.

Cactus looks sadly at Linda, who's walking away with her case.

FORRESTER

Whatsamatter?

CACTUS

Linda's taking good care of you.

FORRESTER

Yeah. She's different than I thought..

CUT TO

Abbie is playing the harmonica on the lake shore. Sonora comes to sit right behind him, but she can't see him from where she is. He stops playing. She's reading the letters.

VOICE (v.o.)

" Dear Cactus, we arrived at Barker Ranch yesterday and I felt home again. There's a lot of work to do here. The fruit trees have to be pruned and the swimming pool is dried up. That's a real drag. I love taking a bath in the middle of the desert. I really hope you'll join us soon because we're getting close ...".

Scott comes to sit next to her. He puts blankets down on the ground. Sonora stops reading. She's all enthused by her lecture.

SONORA

Y'know, it'd be so cool to go and live in the hole... it would shock the world!

SCOTT

Who tells ya we can live in there?

SONORA

You ignorant? You know what Linda says... in Tunisia in the Mawlata... Ma... something like that...

They keep talking on and on. Abbie smiles and keeps staring at the lake.

CUT TO

Danny is kneeling by the fire. Angela is lying on the sleeping bag in front of him. She starts laughing with herself.

DANNY

What's up?

ANGELA

I was thinking about Goodyear ...
They look at each other and smile.

CUT TO

Linda is sitting alone near the truck. She's looking inside her attache case. She closes it and smiles. She's satisfied. Finally things are working out right for her. She goes back to the camp, where Forrester is.

LINDA

Hi.

Forrester gives her the last sip of Tequila.

FORRESTER

Come and sit next to me.

She does so. She lies her head on his shoulder. They've come along way to find each other. They're still shy about it, but they can't hide it.

FORRESTER

How do you feel?

LINDA

I'm nervous ... what kind of a day you think it'll be tomorrow?
Forrester looks up at the sky.

FORRESTER (ironic)

I think it'll be the first day of the rest of our lives...

66.EXT.ROUTE 17.MORNING.

The pickup truck is traveling on the Mormon LakeFlagstaff route. It's early morning. Everybody still half asleep. Now the atmosphere in the truck is so quiet that it seems like the newly found unity of the "family" will last forever. The road is peaceful as a postcard. Then a curve. Around the curve a police car. A road block. The truck stops. One of the three officers at the block walks over to the pickup. Scott, Sonora, Angela and Danny are in the front.

COP #1

Your license and registration please.

DANNY (sarcastic)

Catchin' anything today...

COP #1

Just a routine check...

The cop grins at him and goes back to the car. The group waits, nobody seems nervous. Only Linda, who's sitting in the back, keeps staring at the cop car, while the patrolman is running the license check. The cop walks back to the truck. He's moving very slowly, a little too slowly. He gets to the window, but doesn't hand the papers back to Scott.

COP #1You folks better follow me to the station in Flagstaff..

Everybody is surprised.

DANNY

Whatsamatter?

COP #1

It seems like you've been traveling in an alleged stolen property across state lines...

SCOTT

That's bullshit! Only a cop would say such a stupid thing...

Danny gazes at Scott. The cop grins. End of the conversation. The other two officers move in. The group grows uneasy. Especially Linda, who's clutching her case.

COP #1

Allright, now get out slowly and don't touch...

He hasn't even finished what he had to say when Linda jumps out from the opposite side and starts running away. She's in a panic. Forrester is speechless. One of the cops pulls out his gun and orders her to stop, while the other two keep an eye on the rest of the group. Linda is running down the road. It's an impossible attempt. The cop is much faster. Linda stumbles, loses her balance. The cops gets her. Linda's face is a mask of fear. The cop grabs the case from her. Opens it slowly, looks inside it and then dumps the content on the ground. Amongst the papers and the notebook pages, a roll of hundred dollar bills ends down on the asphalt. The cops looks up at her.

FORRESTER (shaking his head)

Shit...

The group, stunned and confused, turns to Forrester, who's not hiding his complicity with Linda.

67.EXT.POLICE STATION.MORNING.

Across the street from the police station, sitting on a bench, are Sonora, Forrester, Abbie, Angela and Cactus. Everybody's upset. Forrester seems like a lion in a cage. He's pacing, smoking cigarettes. Nobody wants to talk to him. After what seems like an eternity, Danny comes out of the police station and comes towards the group. They're anxious to hear what he has to say.

SONORA

How's Scottie?

DANNY

His parents are coming tomorrow to get him. He looks at Forrester, who's clearly embarrassed. There's a touch of bitterness in Danny's voice.

DANNY

... Linda... she's gonna be sent back to Pennsylvania to face charges.

ANGELA

I can't believe it. How could she not have told us...why did she run away like that..

She stops, realizing she's wasting words.

DANNY (cold)

I understand her.

Everybody is surprised by his remark. Danny shows no anger.

DANNY

She got the money because she didn't think we were going to make it... we weren't her idea of an organized scientific expedition... and besides, she's been fucked over too many times..

Danny smiles, trying to cheer up the others.

DANNY

I respect her, you know... she knew what she wanted..

The group is silent. Forrester lost in thoughts.

CACTUS

What's gonna happen to her?

DANNY

I think she should get off pretty easy ... but we can't stay here and moan ... we have a mission to complete.

Danny picks up his gear.

DANNY

Jake's money's in Needles. We get there, we buy a jeep and we'll be in Death Valley by sunset...

Everybody hesitates for a second. It seems like without their two mates part of the energy is gone.

DANNY

Whatsamatter? Nobody said it was going to be easy..

The others pick up their stuff. They believe in Danny. And now that's what counts. Only Forrester doesn't move.

FORRESTER

I'm staying. I'm gonna wait for Linda.

The group looks up at Forrester.

DANNY

If that's what you want... What about Rhonda?

FORRESTER (ironic)

Rhonda is then, Danny. Linda is now. (serious again) Cactus has you. You'll take good care of her...

DANNY

You're making a big mistake, pal. There's nothing you could do for Linda.

FORRESTER

I know. That's not the point. I went along with you all this time Danny, and I don't regret it, not one bit, but now I gotta think about myself for once...

DANNY (sarcastic)

So whaddya gonna do now? Get Linda outta jail, get married and have kids? The hole, Forrester, this is the most important thing we've ever done together...

FORRESTER

Yeah... important, important for you Danny.

Danny shakes his head.

DANNY

...anybody else wanna stay? What 'bout you Sonora?

Sonora is hesitant. She looks at Forrester, then back at the others.

SONORA

Scott... well he is my fiance, I don't want to abandon him... but... I'll see him again one day... Forrester tell him...

She turns back at Forrester, looking for words.

FORRESTER

I know what to tell him. G'ahead.

The others say goodbye to Forrester. Danny goes over to Forrester, offers him his handshake.

DANNY

So long pardner. See you around.

FORRESTER (moved)

You bet. There's one thing I wanted to give you in New York if you didn't come...

He pulls out from his jacket a picture of Danny. Much younger. He gives it to Danny.

FORRESTER

It's the first picture I took of you.

Danny and Forrester look at each other.

FORRESTER

Every once in a while look at it.

Danny puts the picture in his bag and embraces Forrester. Cactus walks over to Forrester. The others leave them alone.

CACTUS

It's gonna be hard without you ... but now... I understand, Forrester... I'll never forget.

FORRESTER

There's one thing I never told you...

CACTUS

Rhonda and you...

FORRESTER (smiles)

I guess it was easy to figure it out...

Cactus smiles at him.

FORRESTER

The last time I saw her, in prison, she made me promise her I was going to look after you... hell, I don't know how good I've been... but... now...

CACTUS

When I'll see her...is there anything you want me to tell her?

Forrester thinks about it.

FORRESTER

Yeah, tell her it was a lot of fun...He laughs. She kisses him on the cheek. He touches her face. He turns and walks away. She looks at him, for the last time. Then runs toward the others.

68.EXT.ROUTE 40.MORNING/DAY.

The "family" is hitching. Nobody's picking them up.

DISSOLVE TO

Later. Still no luck. It looks futile. Cars just speed by. They're turns hitchiking, but nobody wants to pick up five

people.

DISSOLVE TO

Noon. Everybody's totally worn out.Cactus and Danny are still standing. Still hitching. Angela walks over to Danny. He's very nervous. It seems like Forrester's departure has put all the weight on his shoulder.

ANGELA

Can't we take a bus?

DANNY (uptight)

We have three dollars and two dimes.

Angela tries to cheer him up.

ANGELA

I wish they stop.

DANNY

I don't.

Angela is upset by his sarcasm. Danny realizes that.

DANNY

Just don't make it more difficult. OK? We'll make it...

Angela doesn't seem very consoled by his determination as she walks back to join Sonora and Abbie sitting on the side of the road.

DISSOLVE TO

Afternoon. Abbie is hitchiking. A van finally stops. They all get in. They should be very excited, but the long wait has taken its toll.

72.EXT.NEEDLES,CALIFORNIA.LATE AFT.

A dusty street, late afternoon. Not a soul in sight. An auto junkyard. A junkyard dog. Very far away, approaching the gate, come Danny and the others. Abbie's playing the harmonica. It's a bluesy soulful minimal kind of tune. It is filled with courage and the possibility of redemption. The junkyard dog is barking at the end of a rope behind a wire mesh fence.

ANGELA

So this is California.

DANNY

This is a junkyard in California.

A Mexican approaches the fence. He looks like he uses grease as shaving cream.

CARLOS

Wacha want, amigos?

DANNY

You Carlos?

CARLOS

Who's askin'?

DANNY

Danny. My name is Danny. I called about the 4x4.

Carlos is at the fence. He gives Danny the once over, as if he's measuring him for a coffin. Then he checks the girls and Abbie. He stares at Cactus.

CARLOS

Muchaca muy buenita... big bucks for her in Las Vegas, amigo, mucho dinero, casinos...

SONORA (under her breath)

Fuck you asshole.

Carlos hears this and laughs.

CARLOS

Hey Danny...that car cost money... you got money?

Danny pulls out a Western Union envelope and takes out a handful of dollar bills.

DANNY

Here, see! They're still wet. I printed 'em myself.

Carlos tries to touch the bills, but Danny pulls them away. Carlos laughs, his fat belly bouncing up and down.

CARLOS

You very funny, come on inside.

Danny notices a hand gun stuck in Carlos' belt. They all go inside. As he walks by Carlos, Abbie spits on the ground. Carlos and Danny walk over to the junkyard's shabby office.

CARLOS (honeyed)

Danny, I make deal with you... you give muchaca and I give you el motor...

DANNY (trying to control himself)

Listen amigo, I don't have time, OK? maybe next time 'round.

CARLOS

Too bad, really too bad, we could make big bucks together, really too

bad amigo, you'll be sorry one day. You know what I say to myself every morning..."Carlos when you sell, don't forget to buy"... me entiende, gringo.

He laughs again. They disappear inside the "office". The rest of the group stays outside, sitting on piles of junk in the sunset.

73.EXT.ROUTE 40.EVE.

A large Chevy Blazer, the real thing, V8 engine, balloon tires, the works, is speeding toward Barstow. The landscape is completely changed. It's almost unrealistic. A no man's land called Devil Playground, just a small fraction of the Mojave Desert. The trip continues.

CUT TO

Inside the four wheeler. Danny's driving. Abbie sits next to him. The three girls are squashed in the back. The "family" looks around. There's hardly any room to move. Every square inch is used up. There are drums for gasoline, water, canteens, a tent, first aid kit, crations, blankets and several cooking utensiles.

DANNY

Here we go guys! Here we go!

ANGELA

Don't you think Abbie should drive?

DANNY

Why Angela? Why?

ANGELA

You don't have a license.

DANNY

Angela, look around you! This is the West. The West is the best, c'mon here babe and we'll do the rest... (with a Mexican accent) we don't need no stinking license! (pause) Y'know what Charlie Manson said? ...he said " I love music, what can I say?"

Danny has a crazy smile on his face. He cackles. He takes his wallet and throws out of the window all his identification. He's fallen into the warp. His dark aviator glasses reflect the sun. They reflect the road. Reality is on the outside now. The rebel has found a cause.

DANNY

This is a free country Angela... no licenses, no I.D.'s, no passports... just our minds and our bodies and the hole in front of us... waiting for us... we'll show the world Angela, we'll show the new beginning! There's an awkward look between Angela and the others.

SONORA

Danny, what's all this stuff?

DANNYProvisions. Just provisions.

Everybody looks at each other.

SONORA

... provisions?

ANGELA

Provisions for what?

DANNY

The hole. We're going to the hole. And we're going forever Angela. Forever is a long time. We'll need provisions.

ANGELA

Forever?

DANNY

Forever, Angela. This ain't like going to your aunt for Sunday supper...

Danny is deadly serious. The nature of the trip so evident now. They are flesh and blood, hustling down the highway at 70 mph in a two ton piece of steal and glass driven by a madman. Welcome to California.

DANNY

Look in the back, I got you all presents... the round boxes...

Sonora grabs the boxes. Inside is a cowboy hat for everybody. Cowboys hat are passed around.

ABBIE (under his breath)

Too bad John Wayne is not here...

Everyone puts on their's, except Angela. Danny's been wearing his since New York: it's beaten, stained, bent and bruised. He look right at home there.

74.EXT.ROUTE 40/MOJAVE DESERT.NIGHT.

The 4x4 has pulled off the road. Sonora's wildly running aroundin a deserted area, just barely lit by the moonlight. The "teenager" is finally free. Cactus is watching her, smiling; she's opening up now that the destiny of her trip is getting closer. Danny's studying a map inside the car. Abbie is eating from a containers of Crations. It's not too appetizing. Danny comes out of the four wheel drive carrying Angela's hat. She's sitting on the tailgate. She seems to have lost part of her initial energy. Danny drops the hat on her head.

DANNY

What's on your mind?

ANGELA

When we get to Barstow... I go... I will get on a bus.

DANNY

To where?

ANGELA

It doesn't really matter.

Danny looks out at the desert.

DANNY

Whatsamatter, you don't like America anymore?

ANGELA

You said to me "New York is just a place" ... well, America is just a place... we have been in half the states of America and all I learned was that I didn't need to go so far to find myself...

DANNY

But the hole is not just a place.

ANGELA

I don't to want to start a new world, Danny. I'd like to change mine...

After all, maybe is not so bad back where I'm from. At least I knowwhat's wrong with it. I care about people, not places Danny...

DANNY

Not people like us?

Angela looks at everybody, everybody's wearing their cowboy hats. She smiles with affection.

ANGELA

People with cowboy hats, Danny?

They look at each other. They know they have come at the end of the line. Danny pulls out some bills from his pocket.

DANNY

Here, for the bus.

Danny turns to the 4x4.

DANNY (shouting)

OK, let's load up!

Angela is still standing where she was, as the rest loads up into the 4x4. She drops her cowboy hat at her feet. She turns and heads for the truck. The 4x4 takes off. The cowboy hat lies on the desert.

75.EXT.BUS STATION.NIGHT.

The 4x4 stands off to one side.

DANNY

When's your bus?

ANGELA

One hour.

They look at each other with great affection. Angela walks close to him and kisses him sweetly on the lips. Danny's bitter. He makes a last try.

DANNY

We're on the same side. You can't deny that.

ANGELA

No. I can't deny that. But I don'tneed another illusion. I grew up with them.

Angela reflects, her mood changes. Softer.

ANGELA

I'll never forget you... go now...

Danny kisses her. They fall into each other arms. Then they separate. Danny climbs up to the truck, sits behind the wheel, looks out of the window. Cactus, Abbie, and Sonora wave to her.

DANNY

Arrivederci.

ANGELA

See you.

The truck takes off, leaving a trail of dust. Angela stands in the bus station all alone.

ANGELA (to herself)

Enjoy yourself.

76.EXT.ROUTE 395.NIGHT.

The four wheel drive passes by the boundaires of the U.S. Naval Weapons base in China lake.

SONORA (o.s.)

Why did she leave?

DANNY (o.s.)

She had an appointment with her aunt for Sunday supper.

ABBIE (o.s.)

I liked Angela. She was OK.

The 4x4 speeds out of China Lake. It seems like nothing could stop it.

77.EXT.PANAMINT VALLEY.DAWN.

The 4x4 is travelling on the dirt road that links the TronaDeath Valley route to Ballarat.After crossing the the salt lake, the 4x4 arrives at the ghost town. A sign says: "Ballarat Ghost Town. Pop. 0". Danny and the others get out. They walk around checking out the town. Ballarat is deserted. The rundown general store and a few cabin are still standing. Among these barely adequate shelters, tons of industrial junk, old car wrecks, rusty heaps that have come here to decompose lie scattered on the desert floor, waiting for nature to break them down to their elemental molecules. The heat and the wind are extraordinary.

Danny sends the others in different directions. He walks to the closer shack.

78.INT.CABIN.DAY.

Danny inspects the abandoned shack. Graffiti on its walls. On one wall is painted in big letters: " IN ORDER TO SURVIVE SURFACE AS OFTEN AS YOU DIVE. Old submariner's motto". An old mattress, broken chairs, beer bottles and porno magazines strewn on the floor. The back window is missing.

DUSKY (o.s.)

Get yer hands up!

Danny does as he's told.

DUSKY (o.s.)

Turn around. Very slowly.

Danny does as he's been told. The grizzled miner of the first scene holding a rusty shotgun faces him.

DUSKY

Any sudden move and I'll send your balls to kingdom come.

Danny does as he's been told.

DUSKY

You can put your arms down now.

Danny does as he's been told. He relaxes a little.

DANNY

That thing loaded? DUSKY

Try something, you'll find out.

Danny goes to a chair and sits, leaning the shotgun against his legs.

DUSKY

Got a cigarette?

Danny reaches into his pocket, comes up with a pack and throws it to Dusky. Dusky catches it. Lights one with a kitchen match off his boot and puffs. He looks out of the window, sees Sonora and Cactus still scouting the ghost town, unaware of the events.

DUSKY

People call me Dusky. I dig up in Coyote Canyon (pause). Where you and your kids headed? A picnic?

DANNY

We're looking for somebody.

DUSKY

Everybody's looking for somebody's, way I figure it.. They look at each other. Danny smiles. Dusky grins.

DANNY

You ever seen people with crosses carved on their foreheads? Dusky looks at Danny a little differently. His question has touched a chord.

DUSKY

Who are you?

DANNY

Just a guy lookin' for somebody.

DUSKY

Lookin' for trouble more like it.

Dusky puts out his cigarette and gets up, stomping the butt into the floor. He grabs his shotgun and heads for the door.

DANNY

Hey... (Dusky turns) Ever heard of people 'round here talking of a hole in the ground?

DUSKY

Sure. Lots of holes 'round here. You're a cop or a wise guy?

DANNY

I'm no cop.

DUSKY (just barely raising the gun)

OK wise guy.. gimme the keys.

Danny reluctantly throws them at Dusky. The miner walks out. Danny follows him.

79.EXT.BALLARAT.DAY.

Dusky and Danny walk out. The sun is a blinding light. Sonora and Cactus are hanging by the general store. They're having a great time wandering around the old miners's town. Abbie is sitting on the tailgate of the 4x4. Dusky turns to Danny.

DUSKY

Got any booze in the car?

Danny nods. Dusky walks to the four wheeler. Abbie gives him a bottle of Tequila.

DUSKY

Much obliged.

Sonora and Cactus have reached Danny.

SONORA (to Danny)

Who the hell is that?

DANNY

The mayor of Ballarat.

80.EXT.BALLARAT.DAY.

Abbie and Dusky are resting in the shade of an old car. They're drinking Tequila. In front of them, Sonora and Cactus are checking out the bizarre garbage collection of the ghost town. Danny is walking alone in the salt lake. He seems very upset.

ABBIE

What did you do before?

DUSKY

Before what?

ABBIE

Before this. Your hands. You weren't born a miner.

Dusky looks at his hands. They're fine, too fine for a broken down miner.

DUSKY (smiles)

I was a teacher. I taught American history. (pause) And you?

ABBIE

I was a bum.

81.EXT.BALLARAT.SUNSET.

Danny and his mates are sitting on the counter of what was once the sheriff office. Now only two sides are still up. It looks like a window on the desert. Abbie's playing his harp, his music at one with nature. Cactus is happy and laughing like never before, she's the desert flower in bloom. Sonora is drinking a lot, laughing and drinking.

SONORA (fairly drunk)

What are we doin' here? Why ain't we going to look for the hole?

Danny shrugs, just as Dusky slowly drives by with their 4x4, heading for his cabin.

ABBIE

I like that Dusky.

DANNY

You like evrybody Abbie.

ABBIE So what?

DANNY

That shows a serious lack of discretion.

ABBIE

Well, he was a teacher before.

DANNY (surprised)

Before what?

82.EXT.BALLARAT SHANTY.NIGHT.

The four members of Danny's party are sleeping in a rundown shack with no front wall. Danny opens his eyes. He hears something. He leans up and looks. Walking around the town, like some aimless sleepwalker is Dusky. He carries a kerosene lamp in front, lighting his path and himself. Danny grabs a flashlight and creeps out of the shanty. The others continue sleeping. Danny sneaks his way up to Dusky's cabin, keeping Dusky in view out of the corner of his eye. He enters the cabin.

83.INT.DUSKY'S CABIN.NIGHT.

Danny slips inside. It's dark. The flashlight throws a narrow beam of light on an immaculately well kept dwelling. A radio, a table, a gun, a shovel, shelves, a bed... a picture. Back to the picture. The picture of a black woman, beautiful and proud. It's the same black woman as in the first scene. More snapshots of the same woman, nailed to the wall. In one, Dusky and her, embraced. Another photo. Back to the photo. It's the same one Forrester showed him in New York of some of the Manson women in court in the photo is Rhonda and the black woman. He rips it off the wall. A thud. Danny stops, clicks off the flashlight and waits for something to happen. Nothing. Still feeling like a thief in the night. Clicks on the flashlight. Moves it right to left. Nothing. Left to right. The pounding of his heart. He shines the light where the gun was on the table. Nothing.

DUSKY

Put that picture down.

The light moves. Dusky stands in the opposite corner pointing the gun at Danny. Danny points the flashlight at Dusky's face, the light shines in his eyes. They stare into each other's eyes. Two searchers with a similar cause.

DANNY (sad, shouting)

Why is everybody always lying to me? If you're a miner I'm Jesus Christ... you're here for your woman... you're here for the hole too. Danny jumps to grab Dusky's rifle. Dusky hits him hard in the face sending Danny to the floor. He picks up the flashlight and points it at Danny.

DUSKY (emotionless)

The valley is filled with carcasses of men who thought like you... men wiser than you... the desert has its own plans for fools of your kind. There are no people out there... only ghosts (he throws Danny's keys at him). G'ahead wise guy (Danny holds the keys). Look for yourself, but let me give you a little piece of advice... before you master her you've gotta survive her...

Abbie, Sonora and Cactus have run up to the door.

DUSKY (bitterly ironic)

Dust and death ... that's all I ever found out there. Death, y'know. Kind of a popular word 'round here.

They gaze at each other challenging. Then Dusky switches the flashlight off.

84.WINGATE WASH ROAD.DAWN.

Danny is driving the 4x4 along the salt lake. Ballarat is left behind. The dirt road bares the shape of the Panamint Range. The canyons. The side roads. Sounds are crisp with excitement. Abbie, Sonora and Cactus bounce on their seats. Sonora has a hell of a hangover. Cactus looks fresh as a daisy.

CACTUS (o.s.)

It feels so good... I've never been happier.
Bounce. Bump.

CUT TO

The 4x4 climbs up a bumpy stretch of dirt road. Winding. Tall sheer cliffs. Narrow canyon. Difficult then easier. Abandoned mine sites along the way, guarded by rusty junk. The rusty metal bulks look like scabs on a pale leper.

85.EXT.SARDOUGH SPRINGS.MORNING.

The vehicle comes to the end of a road There's no driving beyond this point. They get out of the car. Danny, Abbie and Cactus step out, and arrange their back packs.

SONORA

Where you goin'?

DANNY

Barker ranch.

SONORA

You comin' back?

They look at each other.

SONORA

Cause if you are... I seen lots of ranches... I mean I'll wait here ... I'm feeling kind of sick...

Danny nods. Sonora stays in the vehicle. The others grab their backpacks.

SONORA

See if the pool is still dried up...

Cactus smiles at her and follows the others. They advance through an oasis of plants and bushes. it's an up hill climb from here.

86.EXT.BARKER RANCH.MORNING.

Abbie, Danny and Cactus arrive at the ranch. A split pole fence. A yard with fruit trees, a house, a barn, a broken bathtub, and the wreck of an abandoned swimming pool. Clear plastic sheets for glass in the windows. At the gate, a board full of bullet holes warns : "No shooting. No trespassing".

CACTUS (she stops, incredulous)

This is where she lived...

Danny and Abbie keep heading for the main house.

87.INT.BARKER RANCH.MORNING.

Danny and Abbie are in the kitchen. Through the window they can see Cactus excitedly inspecting the garden. What once used to be her mother's garden. The interior is empty but in fair condition.

DANNY

It's the same as she described it... (points a small cabinet under the sink) that's where they caught Manson...

Abbie looks, perplexed by its punyness.

ABBIE

Little guy could run but he could not hide.

From far off the sound of a gunshot echoes. The two jump and head out of the door just in time to see Cactus frightened, running toward them.

88.SARDOUGH SPRINGS RIDGE.MORNING.

The threesome creep to a point just above the 4x4, cautious not to make a sound.

Several rangers in their jeeps surround the vehicle. They carry rifles with scopes. Sonora is being frisked. She still can't stand cops. The sound of a two way radio echoes.

VOICE (o.s.)

Los Angeles calling BLM...

license check: California 394TTW vehicle reported stolen on Needles P.D. report number three eight eight... suspected drug smugglers ... use caution ... safeties off!

They creep to a safer place.

CACTUS (whispering)

What's goin' on.. what drug smuggling... what's safeties off?

DANNY

Carlos! Fuckin' Carlos... he sold us the car. And then he sold us...

89.EXT.GOLER WASH.DAY.

The threesome march like some funky military patrol, boiling in the heat and blinded by the light of the sun. Nature is beginning to play her hand, as if to say "welcome to the beginning of the new world".

CUT TO

Walking slower, paranoid and nervous, they reach the Mengele Pass. They're all sweating and tired. Danny's always in front, looking more and more crazed. Cactus follows him, still in good spirit. There's no shadow whatsoever. Only rocks, gravel and skinny bushes.

90.INT.BUTTE CANYON SHACK.NIGHT. Inside a miner's shack, Danny, Cactus and Abbie are trying to sleep. Abbie's sitting and smoking a cigarette, looking into the darkness. The coyotes howl at the full moon. The wild dogs have mastered the land. The land where the sea level is up in the sky.

91.EXT.BUTTE CANYON RIDGE.DAWN.

On top of a steep canyon, they gaze upon the majestic bareness of Death Valley. This is it.

Dawn washes the valley in a brilliant coat of light. Its enigmatic and frightening beauty is simply beyond words. It is breathtaking as death itself.

Cactus is staring at it, further up the ridge. Standing on the precipice, as if waiting for a strong gust of wind to launch her into flight. She is radiant, completely transformed since we first saw her. Abbie is kneeling on the edge. Danny joins him, ready to go, but Abbie stalls.

ABBIE

We can talk...

DANNY

Have you slept?

ABBIE

No. Not really... it's OK ... (pause) How long we known each other? A long time?

DANNY

I guess... a long time.

ABBIE

So we can talk ... I mean, man to man.

Abbie takes a drink of water from the canteen and gives it to Danny to drink.

ABBIE

You blew it. You really blew it Danny... you missed the point... Abbie gets up, stretches his legs.

DANNY

Where you goin'?

ABBIE

I'm leavin' Danny, and so should you. Look at it. This is useless.

DANNY

You scared, ain't you?

Abbie starts to walk away.

ABBIE (finally passionate)

This is not the way to the hole. Look at it! This is no beginning Danny. This is the end.

DANNY

I don't know why I even fuckin' bother with you. You're nothin but a bum... a fuckin' bum.

Cactus walks down toward them. She sees Abbie leaving.

CACTUS

Where you goin'?

ABBIE

I'm goin' back. You should too.

CACTUS

Danny?

DANNY

There's no turning back...

CACTUS (resolute)

Danny's right Abbie.

Abbie looks at her for the last time, then turns and walks away.

CACTUS

There are rangers down there!

ABBIE

That's OK. I haven't done anything.

Danny is looking down at Death Valley and across at the Funeral Mountains.

92.EXT.BUTTE CANYON.DAY.

Cactus and Danny walk down the canyon. The sun is unrelenting as it rises higher and higher in the sky. The air is shimmering with heat. Danny is the leader. Cactus follows. Danny's upset and leads the way with a brisk pace. As they hit the valley floor, they are suddenly made painfully aware of the futility of their attempt. Nevertheless Danny continues. Cactus follows.

93.EXT.DEATH VALLEY FLOOR.DAY.

Danny and Cactus walk across the salt flats of the valley floor. The valley creates awesome compositions. Expansive lightness and the puny black figures against it. Cactus eats the last apple. Her clothes are sweat soaked. Her skin turning red. She continues walking.

CUT TO

Danny's still leading. The walking is getting more painful. Cactus stumbles and Danny helps her up. She holds the jug of water up to her mouth. The last drops. Continue walking.

CUT TO

Close ups of the feet walking, the pace is getting slower. Exhaustion is coming on. Quickly.

CACTUS

Where are we going?

DANNY

North to the Funeral Mountains.

CUT TO

They are in the middle. Cactus looks like she's going to die and she looks like she knows it. She is walking in a fever. Danny's eyes are beginning to bug out from lack of moisture. Heat is everywhere.

94.EXT.CANYON ENTRANCE.LATE AFT.

Danny's dragging himself and Cactus, trying to get off the valley floor before night falls. Trying to get to a crevice, a rock, anything like protection. They cross a road, as fast as they can, afraid to be seen. They enter Desolation canyon. They fall into shade for the first time all day. Cactus is looking very ill. Danny manages to pull off his shoes. Cactus faints. Danny is mumbling incoherently. Night falls.

95.EXT.DESOLATION CANYON.DAWN.

The beauty of the landscape, so seemingly lifeaffirming, masks its deadly nature. Cactus is squirming in her sleep, twisting and shivering. She's moaning and groaning. Tremors set in. Danny awakens and crawls to her. He tries to warm her. He caresses her. He holds her head and burries it in his chest. He rocks her back and forth.

CACTUS

Danny?

DANNY

Mmm...

Her voice reveals terror and pain at the same time.

CACTUS

...I don't think I can walk, I don't think I can stand...

Danny looks at her sad face.

CACTUS

Danny... don't leave me here...

DANNY (mumbling)

Don't worry. I'll come back. I promise...

Danny starts to leave.

CACTUS

... I'm afraid...She stops talking as Danny continues to walk away. He himself doesn't look like he's gonna make it. She keeps looking until he fades from view.

96.EXT.DESOLATION CANYON.MORNING.

Danny is now alone. He climbs and searches among the cliffs, mountains, canyons and rocks. He is out there and he's nearing his destiny. He's looking really bad. His skin is burnt, his eyes are swollen.

DANNY (whispering to himself)

I know you're out there...

The whisper magically echoes across the canyon, his every word magnified a thousand times. It's as if nature is mimicking him. Making fun of him. Laughing at his mortality and his arrogance.

DANNY (echo)

I'm coming to get you!

97.EXT.MUDHILLS.DAY.

The blinding sun and the empty sky mock Danny's humanity. He struggles his way out of labyrinthine mudhills. Suddenly, he sees a series of weirdly constructed rock formations. The form man made. He drags into the his back pack and comes up with a handful of photos. He accidentally drops one without realizing it. It's the picture Forrester gave him in Flagstaff. He keeps looking, until he finds the black and white pictures Linda showed them of similar rock formations. They match perfectly. Danny's face turns into an

expression between sadness and ecstasy.

98.EXT.TWENTY MULE TEAM CANYON.DAY.

Danny continues walking and stumbling. Sunburned and exhausted, having ran out of water, he's extremely unstable. He mumbles and talks to himself. He's an incoherent mess. He sees a little cave. He takes off his backpack and crawls in, needing the shade and the coolness. Inside the orifice, he hears some sounds from outside. He scampers out of the hole. His back pack is gone. There's no one there.

DANNY

C'mon, where are you?

He stumbles and hurts his leg. He limps away.

99.EXT.TWENTY MULE TEAM CANYON.DAY.

Danny's crawling across rocks and stones. He starts to hallucinate. Both sounds and sight. He starts to hear and see abstract sound and shapes. The real world is dissolving. The skull of a dead coyote bakes in the sun. There's something natural about all this. This is where Danny belongs. His mind is completely frazzled. His brain gone. He's crawling through purgatory. He tries to smile, but can't. The skin won't stretch. Danny falls on his back. He can barely stare at the blinding sun. He struggles to stand up again. His blurred vision focuses on the eyes of a kid that has appeared behind a rock. He falls again. He lifts his head.

DANNY (in the barest audible whisper)

Who are you?

Several shapes gather around him.

DANNY

Take me to the hole... please, take me to the hole...

VOICE (o.s.)

We haven't found it yet.

It's the same female voice that was reading the letters. But now it's softer, almost ghostly.

DANNY

Don't leave me behind...

The shapes starts moving in circles. Thousands of shapes. Whispering Danny's name. He tries to open his eyes. He can't move. He faints.

LONG FADE TO BLACK

100.EXT.TWENTY MULE TEAM CANYON.DAY.

Sounds and images fade in, but they're still confused, blurred, hallucinatory. A huge, dazzling whiteness.

MALE VOICE #1

... is he alive?

MALE VOICE #2

Go slow on the water...

Slowly the real world comes back. Sounds and images return to their

original shapes. A woman is standing in front of Danny.

DANNY (mumbling)

Rho... Rhonda... help me...

Everything comes back to focus.

CACTUS

It's me Danny. It's Cactus.

Cactus is holding Danny's hand as Dusky and Abbie are lifting him up in their arms. Sonora, perfectly cool as usual, is looking at them with binoculars. She's only five feet away... Danny hasn't noticed her. On Cactus' face are the marks and scars of their suicidal attempt. She looks a little bit better than Danny, but her voice still shivers in terror. But she is changed. She's not the Cactus she used to be at the beginning of the trip, not even the enthusiastic teenager of the end. Her expression is concrete, mature. The scars on her face create a truer vision of Cactus.

DANNY (mumbling)

...where we goin'?

CACTUS

Back home, Danny. We're going back.

DANNY

... Rhonda... CACTUS

She's lost Danny. She wants to be lost. There's nothing for us out here... it's over.

Dusky and Abbie are carrying Danny to an old jeep standing on the side of a dirt road. Cactus follows them. Sonora puts down the binoculars.

SONORA

Hey Danny, guess I've seen you in a better shape, uh?

DANNY (slowly turning his head)

Sonora ... how...

SONORA (winking)

Hey cowboy, did you really think I was going to miss all the fun? Aah, haa, you know better than that. They can stop us, but they can't break us.

Danny smiles at her brazen words. It's the first moment of relief after days of craziness and paranoia. Danny drops his head down, almost as if to release the pain of his body. He looks back to the place where they found him.

There's a cross stuck in the ground just near where he was. Two pieces of old wood tied together and a picture nailed on them. The picture of Danny Forrester gave him in Flagstaff. The picture he dropped in the canyon. The picture of what Danny used to be.

The end.

