

SILENT RIDER

A screenplay by
Darren (Borzage) Block
Registered WGAw
#1607971

FADE IN ON:

TITLE SEQUENCE:

INT. BUS STATION - MIDNIGHT

CLOSE ON - MOVIE STAR – WAYNE MACKKEY JR. as he sits quietly behind black sunglasses waiting for his bus. A three-day beard and the wide brim of a beat-up cowboy hat shades all but just a hint of his perfect chin. He believes that he’s mastered a consummate disguise but ironically his determination to be anonymous makes him the target of every eye. He stares straight ahead, pretending not to be noticed.

CLOSE ON – a short filterless cigarette as Wayne lights it with the tiny butt of one burned down to nothing, flicking what’s left to the ground in a silent shower of sparks. He tries to ignore the pain - secretly rubbing his singed fingers together.

From a distant corner of the terminal, Wayne spots A WOMAN approaching; an ordinary woman drawn toward him like a giddy bride - waving a pen and an old bus ticket stub like a bouquet. Like a million times before, Wayne pretends to remain unaware until that awkward moment of unwanted contact. Wayne snatches the pen and the old bus ticket stub from her hand and hides them under his coat. He pulls her down by her dress onto the bench beside him. He speaks to her softly, making sure no one else hears.

WAYNE

How did you know who I was?

WOMAN

You wore that hat in Whiskey Train. And those were the glasses from Death Race. You were so funny in that movie.

WAYNE

It wasn't a comedy, six hundred and eighteen people died in that film. Not a comedy.

WOMAN

I'd be honored to have your autograph. Could you make it to 'my true love, Donna, love Wayne Mackey.'

He takes out the pen, signs her ticket stub and hands it back to her, making sure that no one sees him do it.

WAYNE

I'd really rather not have anybody know I'm here.

WOMAN

Maybe you should stop wearing clothes from your movies. Listen to me telling Wayne Mackey what to do.

WAYNE

No you have a good point. Too recognizable. I always tried to tell them my clothes were too recognizable, that acting should be the focus, not the cool clothes or the glasses – or the guns - but they wouldn't listen. That's the problem Donna - nobody listens.

Hearing Wayne Mackey Jr. speak her name gets her very excited and nervous...and strangely possessive.

WOMAN

You said my name! Who are you waiting for? Are you waiting for someone?!

Wayne counters her energy by becoming dead calm, something he's mastered over the years of having fans get star-struck in his presence.

WAYNE

No. I'm on the next bus. I've quit making movies and I'm leaving L.A. - tonight. So....

WOMAN

Like in Runaway when you left Wall Street for Marissa Tome. You were so strong.

WAYNE

But this isn't a movie.

WOMAN

If it were I'd be in an Wayne Mackey movie. I'd just die. I'd die, then I'd kill myself. And now we're on the same bus!

She practically passes out at the thought.

The woman takes her prize and dashes off across the terminal to a far corner where her friend waits for her. The woman whispers to her friend and they both gaze dreamily in Wayne's direction.

END TITLES - DISSOLVE TO CHYRON – ***TWO DAYS EARLIER ...***

EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS – DAY

PANNING PAST the *Paramount Sign* and onto the movie lot.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WAYNE MACKEY JR'S DRESSING ROOM – DAY

Wayne Mackey sits in his makeup chair. He is being worked on by three makeup artists, putting the finishing touches on dozens of fake cuts and bruises. Wayne is the quintessential movie star. An action hero, who's movies carry the distinction of 'highest body count in Hollywood'.

Wayne watches a small television as his makeup is being finished. A national newscast is on.

CLOSE ON THE TELEVISION--

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

As the gun debate rages on, another mass shooting has claimed the lives of twenty seven people inside a Catholic church in Bangor Maine.

A young ambitious assistant director steps halfway into the doorway of the dressing room.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Ready for you on set Mr. Mackey.

On Wayne as he stands and removes his makeup apron. He picks up two prop AK-47's, one in each hand, and looks at his cut and bruised face in the mirror.

WAYNE

How do I look?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Like a bad ass killing machine sir.

Wayne reaches out with one of the guns to turn off the TV with the tip of the barrel. Just before he turns it off, his attention is caught by the newscaster.

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

Sixteen of those gunned down were children under the age of ten. The gunman was said to be inspired by the character in the movie – Death Race.

WAYNE

That was me.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM – BED

VIOLET BAINS, a young woman in A FURRY BUNNY SUIT –

Violet is as complex and deceptive as she is gritty and real. She's an emotional dichotomy, who never knows if she's telling the truth. Her inner beauty is buried deep behind a life of disappointment and emotional scars. Her life lessons are forced upon her rather than applied by choice, manifesting in a trail of metaphoric and literal destruction.

She is rolling off of A LARGE MAN, DRESSED IN A CHICKEN SUIT. She breaths heavily as she removes the bunny head and lights a cigarette. She takes long drink of whiskey waiting on the bedside table and sits on the edge of a motel room bed, fighting back tears. Smiling through her sadness, she speaks.

VIOLET

So that's just five hundred dollars sweaty.

The man in the chicken suit doesn't respond.

VIOLET

Hey. You still have to pay even if you slept through it.

Again, there is no response. Violet shakes him, but he is obviously dead. She takes the chicken head off and listens for his breath. Violet is disgusted.

VIOLET

Are you kidding me?

CUT TO:

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

An intensely violent scene is playing out. Bodies lie dead everywhere. WAYNE MACKKEY AND HIS PARTNER are involved in a horrendous urban shoot-out scene.

ON WAYNE AND HIS PARTNER, wounded and bleeding as they take cover behind a burning car. They take and return fire with AK-47's, and semi-automatic hand guns. The shooting suddenly stops.

A SMALL EIGHT YEAR OLD ACTRESS walks out from a dark doorway. She's wearing a suicide vest and walks slowly toward Wayne.

WAYNE raises his gun, but somehow he can't shoot.

ON THE LITTLE GIRL as she stops, not knowing why Wayne's character isn't shooting. She throws up her hands.

ON WAYNE as he hears the newscaster's voice echo in his head... "Sixteen of those gunned down were children." EVERYTHING SUDDENLY GOES QUIET AND STOPS.

PANNING BACK TO REVEAL they are on a movie set. The lighting shifts – we see the GREEN SCREEN APPEAR IN BACK OF THE ACTORS.

THE DIRECTOR YELLS...

DIRECTOR

Cut! What happened there? You shoot her and she blows up. Boom.

Wayne hangs his head, breaths a heavy sigh and deliberately drops his weapon.

PARTNER

(breaking character)

What are you doing?

WAYNE

I can't do this anymore.

PARTNER

Do what?

Wayne is visibly shaken, fighting back tears and rage. There is a stunned silence on the set.

WAYNE

(disgusted – then yelling)

She's a little kid! I'm blowing up a little kid!?

PARTNER

(in shock)

Wayne, it's a movie.

WAYNE

Is it! Is it a movie?

PARTNER

I guess? I don't know.

WAYNE

Well I know. This is my life? I can't do this anymore.
I'm the problem. We're all – the problem. Well I quit.

DIRECTOR

You can't just quit. What am I supposed to tell everyone?

WAYNE

(walking away)

Tell them that Wayne Mackey Jr., the movie star - is dead.

Wayne holds one of the prop handguns to his head and pulls the trigger – CLICK.

A shocked movie set watches as Wayne walks off the sound stage.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM – SAME

Violet searches the man, finds his wallet, takes out a wad of cash. She sits on the edge of the bed and begins to count the money.

She starts to cry, then sob. She's reached her breaking point. She throws money into the air.

SLOW MOTION--

The money rains down.

ON VIOLET-- Screaming through her tears.

VIOLET

I quit!!

She storms out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO – HALLWAY – DAY

Wayne storms down a hallway. CARL SULLIVAN (SULLY) sits in a chair in front of a door, marked – MASTER FILM STORAGE. Sully is a sweet, naive, kind soul, in his seventies and knows Wayne very well. He is extremely surprised to see him.

SULLY

Mr. Mackey. Pleasure to see you sir. What brings you down here.

Wayne tries the door knob on the film storage door. It's locked.

WAYNE

How are those grand kids Sully?

SULLY

Great grand kids. Just fine Mr. Mackey, just fine.?

Wayne rattles the door.

WAYNE

Give me a hand with this door, would you.

SULLY

Sure thing.

Sully unlocks the door and Wayne goes in. WE HEAR HIM rattling around as Sully talks to him from the hallway.

SULLY

Whatcha need there Mr. Mackey?

Wayne comes out pushing a large metal cart, loaded with reels of film and a gallon container.

WAYNE

My life Sully. I need my life. Gimme a hand here.
What's in this bottle?

SULLY

Acetone.

WAYNE

Let's get this into the light. Sully, this is every terrible
violent film I've ever made. Masters – right?

They both push the cart down the hallway, outside, and out onto the movie lot, stopping in the middle of a large open space.

WAYNE

You gotta match?

Sully searches his pockets as Wayne pours the acetone over the films.

SULLY

Here you go. How's the *new* movie comin' along?

Wayne lights the match and throws it onto the cart. The films ignite into a large blaze.

WAYNE

I'm done with the new movie Sully. I'm all done. You say hi to your family for me.

Wayne walks away across the movie lot, leaving Sully stunned. The films burn.

SULLY

Will do Mr. Mackey.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO – DAY

Wayne speeds out of the movie studio in a red Maserati convertible. As he turns the corner, he tosses several scripts out of the car. The pages fly everywhere.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

INT BUS STATION:

SETH MOLEN sits behind thick glass in his tiny ticket booth. His complexity comes from a combination of being an aging burnout and a modern day messiah, who ultimately becomes Wayne's unlikely spiritual guide to truth and self realization.

Wayne dejectedly pushes his ticket across the counter.

WAYNE

I'd like to trade this ticket in.

SETH

Is there a problem?

WAYNE

I just need to get on a different bus.

SETH

There's no other bus to where you're going?

WAYNE

I don't care, just get me another ticket.

SETH

Where to?

WAYNE

Surprise me.

SETH

The next bus out ends up in Franklin Idaho on ... next Thursday. Number sixty-eight. Weather won't let us take you directly north - so you'll have to travel sixty-six to Oklahoma and then up and around. It's one of our older buses, so I hope you don't mind a bit of a bumpy ride. And the driver is just about to retire, so yea. And I don't envision a lot of other passengers, so I'd recommend you take some reading material, or something to keep yourself entertained.

WAYNE

How many people live in Franklin Idaho?

SETH

Not as many as Vegas.

WAYNE

Sixty eight then.

ON SETH as he pushes the new ticket across the counter but pulls it back as Wayne reaches for it.

Seth leans into the glass.

SETH

I know what you're going through. It's like a box, man. It's like a glass box that gets smaller and smaller. Everybody's watching and everybody wants something. I know. You need to get out of the box man.

WAYNE

Can I just have my ticket?

Seth is insulted.

SETH

That's another thirty six dollars.

Wayne sees that he's insulted him.

WAYNE

Hey I didn't mean to be a jerk, but,
it's just that - you don't know me.

SETH

But I was listening.

WAYNE

I'm sorry.

SETH

You said nobody listens. Am I nobody?

WAYNE

I'm just not used to dealing with regular people.
(he pulls down his sunglasses)
I'm Wayne Mackey Jr.

Wayne takes off the glasses and points out the People Magazine on the stool next to Seth. Wayne's picture is on the cover as the 'Sexiest Man Alive'. Seth is unimpressed. Wayne slides two twenties across the counter.

SETH

So I should keep the change?

WAYNE

Sure. I guess. And again - I'm really

SETH

I'll tell you when people listen - when they want
something - then they listen real good.

Seth picks up a microphone and through the feedback addresses the passengers in the terminal. He intentionally fakes enthusiasm as he stuffs Wayne's four dollar tip into his pocket.

SETH

May I have your attention please?

Everyone in the terminal gets quiet. Seth waits a good long time before he makes his announcement, savoring the power of the moment.

SETH

Greyhound proudly announces the arrival of bus number
seven from Anaheim and we would now like to invite
you to board. The next stop is Las Vegas Nevada.
Bathrooms are at the back of the bus.

He releases the lever on the microphone with a high-pitched crack that seems to echo through the terminal forever. His professionalism turns off with the microphone as he slumps back down in his chair waiting for the next bit of his soul to be snipped away by somebody who thinks they're better than him.

Wayne sits back down on the bench and pops open one of same People Magazines with his face on the cover and hides behind it as the remaining passengers board bus number seven for Las Vegas Nevada. He looks up just in time to see the bus pulling away and Donna's heartbroken face in the last window in the back, the autographed ticket stub pressed up against the glass. He cautiously looks around to see that the terminal is empty.

SETH

That lady turned in her ticket to get on the same bus that you would have been on. She was going home to see her family for the first time in ten years – but instead, she's on her way to Vegas. I hope she wins.

WAYNE

She did?

SETH

Yea, she did. I'll bet you think that's funny.

WAYNE

No. It's not funny at all. In fact, that's the saddest thing I've ever heard.

Seth sits back down in his chair. The unmistakable sound of several Harley-Davidson motorcycles rumbles up to the glass wall of the terminal that leads out to the buses. Seth cowers as five Harleys stop. The riders dismount in unison and stride deliberately to the glass. They stop in unison. The riders are menacing as they stand an even foot apart, staring coldly inside.

SETH

Uh-o.

Again in unison, the bikers lift their left hands and all point at Wayne. Wayne meekly points at himself to verify that it's him they're pointing at. They all nod (in unison.) Seth takes a deep breath - as if he knows something very strange is about to happen.

WAYNE

Why are they pointing at me?

SETH

Maybe they're fans.

WAYNE

I don't know. They don't look too friendly.

SETH

Well..... time for me to go to work.

Seth gives the bikers a thumbs up. As though a spell had been removed, they break from their positions, mount their bikes and ride away.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - 11:15 AM

Violet is hitchhiking by the side of a desert highway. She is still dressed in her bunny suit, the giant head under her arm.

A big-rig stops and picks her up.

INT. TRUCK – SAME

Violet sits down and puts the bunny head between her and the truck driver.

TRUCK DRIVER

I'm thinkin' there's a story here.

VIOLET

No. No story. I just need a ride.

TRUCK DRIVER

Look, I'll take you wherever you want to go. But you have to tell me the story. I'm on the road eighteen hours a day and I see nothin' but trees – and bacon – and my own fat face in the rear view mirror. So you tell me a cool story – about the bunny suit, or you walk. Do you wanna walk?

VIOLET

Once upon a time – there was a girl named Violet Bains. Violet wanted to be an actress, but she ended up giving heart attacks to middle aged men in chicken costumes. Violet thought she was a free spirit, but her spirit was actually lost a long time

ago. She got old before her time and never did anything with her life. Now she blames and judges other people so she can feel just a little bit better about herself. She contemplates suicide every day, but doesn't have the guts to do it. So she wanders, chasing after herself. But she's too slow. Now she's reached the end of the road and has nowhere left to turn. She's desperate, and lonely and scared. The end.

The truck driver pulls over and kicks Violet out. She stands dejected by the roadside. As the truck pulls away, the bunny head flies out the window and bounces down the highway.

The truck driver yells out the window.

TRUCK DRIVER

That story sucked!

Violet yells back at the truck driver – driving away.

VIOLET

It was a monologue from Purple Rain - ass hole!

CUT TO:

INT. BUS - NIGHT - 1:14 a.m.

TOBY WALLACE, an old-fashioned black gentleman in his late sixties is an old-school bus driver who believes in dedication and service - always professional, always courteous. Close to retirement, Toby's a man who makes sure that all the rules are followed - because he has to – his job depends on it.

The light in the very back of the bus flickers with each ripple in the road. The buzzing of the wheels is amplified by the absence of warm bodies and the flickering light adds unnecessary drama to Wayne and Seth sitting side by side, knees touching, talking with the intensity of a real conversation.

WAYNE

I just had to get out, you know. It's like I couldn't control it. It was... visceral.

SETH

It's like rub-adub-dub.

Wayne looks perplexed.

SETH

Rub-a-dub-dub three men in a tub and how do you think they got there? The butcher the baker the candlestick maker, they all jumped out of a rotten potato. 'Twas enough to make a man stare.

WAYNE

Is that really how that goes?

SETH

That's really how it goes.

WAYNE

That's intense.

SETH

And we're them.

WAYNE

Really?

SETH

We're the butcher and the baker. And this bus is the tub. They all jumped out of a rotten potato - they all jumped out of their scene like we jumped out of ours.

WAYNE

But I'm seriously having second thoughts.

SETH

L.A. is the rotten potato - you had to jump out of it. You did the right thing.

WAYNE

'Twas enough to make a man stare. People are always staring at me.

SETH

I can see you dig.

WAYNE

Who's the candlestick maker.

SETH

I don't know.

WAYNE

Maybe it's the bus driver.

SETH

It's not the bus driver.

WAYNE

Then who is it?

SETH

I don't know.

WAYNE

Why can't it be the bus driver?

SETH

Cause he's a bus driver - not a candlestick maker.

WAYNE

He's not a candlestick maker.

SETH

No he's not. Maybe this is his rotten potato. He hasn't jumped out of it yet.

WAYNE

So which one am I?

SETH

You're both. I'm both. We're both - both.

WAYNE

How can that be?

SETH

The baker's essence is to create and the butcher's essence is to destroy. They both provide nourishment but they represent different ends of the spiritual spectrum. You create - I destroy. On screen - you destroy - and here - I create... You've never killed anyone in real life, right?

WAYNE

No.

SETH

We know that there's only so much we can take - then we snap and we gotta go the opposite way - like a pendulum... or a rubber band – or something.

Wayne looks puzzled.

WAYNE

And what about the bus driver?

SETH

He's just transporting the experience man.

WAYNE

Wow. That's deep.

Seth laughs.

SETH

It's not that deep man. It's a little kid's nursery rhyme.

There's a long awkward silence.

WAYNE

You really killed someone? Who did you kill?

SETH

Nobody special. You would have done the same thing.

Wayne sits back in his seat and takes a sad - deep breath.

WAYNE

So L.A.'s the rotten potato? That makes sense.

SETH

L.A. is the rottenest potato of 'em all man.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS – NIGHT

VIOLET sits in front of a small campfire in a clearing. She is picking fur from her bunny suit and tossing it ceremonially into the flames. As each ball of fur bursts into flames, she calls out the name of one of her tricks.

VIOLET
(tossing fur balls into the fire)
Bill Latour – giant duck. Paul Lemon – Penguin.
Ray Malone – Pink Raccoon. Andy Freeman -
Big Chicken...

A pack of WOLVES approaches the fire. Violet doesn't see them.

VIOLET
(continued)
Zander Alacoat – Ringmaster Horse...

She looks up to see that the wolves have surrounded her and the fire.

The wolves all growl.

She picks up the bunny head by the ears and dips it into the fire, setting it ablaze. She turns around in a large circle, driving the wolves back.

As she begins to panic, the wolves all sit down in unison – then they lay down.

Violet throws the bunny head into the fire and it goes up in a large flame.

All the wolves look up at the rising fire, that reflects in their eyes.

WE HEAR them collectively whimper.

Violet sits back down and watches as the BURNING BUNNY HEAD slowly turns to ash.

VIOLET
Goodbye old friend.

One of the male wolves gets up, walks over to the waning fire, lifts his leg – AND PEES.

VIOLET
A fitting end.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS - DAWN

The sun creeps painfully under Wayne's eyelids, red from only two hours sleep and ten years of Hollywood parties. The bus idles at a small bench-stop in Arizona. With his shoulder propping up Seth's greasy head, Wayne slides his last cigarette from behind his ear and with trembling fingers he straightens it out, lights it, then quickly plucks it from his mouth as Toby glances back at him. He holds the smoke in his lungs until Toby turns his eyes back to the road. Wayne snaps his shoulder out from under Seth's head to lean down behind the seat for another drag. Seth wakes up hard, but ready to share his dreams.

SETH

Oh man. I dreamed about this badger - or a hedgehog. I was picking avocados - that must represent L.A. - and they'd dissolve in my hands so that I just had a basket full of pits. And my eyes were blue. But I wasn't really me. I had a third arm that kept punching me in the side. And my mom was there but she didn't have *any* arms.

WAYNE

Why a badger? What do you think the badger was. Was it me? Was I the badger?

SETH

It might have been a hedgehog. I don't know. You got another smoke?

WAYNE

This is my last one. I dreamed I was swimming with Tim Burton - and Tony Bennett was shooting at me with a bee-bee gun - and he was singing that f'd up Beatles's song - that instrumental piece of shit that they all wrote together.

SETH

Flying.

WAYNE

Yes - thank you. Why does no one else remember that song?

SETH

Was he singing it or humming it - cause it didn't have any lyrics.

WAYNE

It was more like a scat.

SETH

A scat. Now that's deep.

Wayne presents Seth with his half smoked Camel.

SETH

I gotta pee.

Right behind their seats, the bathroom door is ajar and buzzing with the rhythm of the idling bus engine. Seth hands Wayne's smoke back to him, takes a deep breath and darts into the smelly bathroom.

Wayne rests his head on the edge of the window and stares out at the vast Arizona dawn. Toby is outside tossing bags into the storage compartment under the bus. VIOLET BAINS stands nervously beside him. She's shooing away several wolves that have followed her. She's dressed in layers of purple and pink and violet; scarves and more scarves around her neck and a purse that overflows with sundries and snacks. She tries over and over to hand Toby her ticket, but he seems in no hurry.

Although having made a habit of avoiding eye contact with other human beings, Wayne is strangely compelled to stare. Finally Toby closes the baggage compartment doors, takes Violet's ticket and escorts her to the door of the bus. Wayne smells something foul behind him and reaches back to slam the bathroom door the rest of the way closed.

SETH

Yo - there's no light in here. And no ventilation.

Wayne starts to get visibly nervous as the doors to the bus squeak open and Violet steps up the stairs. He squirms in his seat and slips into his sunglasses. She doesn't even consider the other fifty three empty seats on the bus. She plops down right next to Wayne and starts talking before she's even in the seat.

VIOLET

Do you mind if I sit here 'til we're out of Arizona?
My husband might be following me - ex-husband
as of midnight last night. Jonathan T. Bains, the most
boring man on earth - but as it turns out also
quite psychotic - something you don't find out
about someone until you get caught screwing
the pool boy in the cabana room. Him - not me.
He's totally straight though - just so you don't get the
wrong idea about him. I'm so done! Ever feel that way?
I'm Violet.

Wayne can't think of a thing to say. Seth comes out of the bathroom to see that he's been replaced but he's pleasantly surprised by Violet.

SETH

That's my seat but that's okay. I'm Seth.

Seth shakes her hand and doesn't let go.

WAYNE

And I'm...

Seth interrupts him.

SETH

This is Todd Mantooth. He's a famous homosexual.

VIOLET

Oh I'm so stupid. I hope you weren't offended by what I said before about my husband - ex-husband not being gay. My parents were insane. I don't know what's wrong with me. What's that smell?

Seth kicks the bathroom door closed.

WAYNE

I'm not a homosexual.

VIOLET

Now you think I'm racist against the gays. Well I'm not. Look.

Violet pulls Wayne into her by the back of the head and kisses him with as much tongue as she can muster.

VIOLET

See. Now I could have whatever you have and I don't care.

She breaks down crying.

SETH

What's wrong?

VIOLET

I kissed a fagot.... and now I said fagot!

SETH

Hey it's okay. He's not gay. I just said that.
I got confused - and insecure - I am extremely
messed up.

She composes herself.

VIOLET

You're not gay?

WAYNE

No.

VIOLET

Well you sure kiss like it.

WAYNE

First of all I wasn't kissing you - you were kissing
me. Second of all I just woke up. And third of all I
don't even know you.

VIOLET

Hey I've kissed dead guys that were better than
that. You need help.

WAYNE

Look, I was just sitting here.

VIOLET

You're Wayne Mackey. You are the worst actor I've
ever seen - you're movies are disgusting. When I
saw you The Bleeding Heart I swear to God I had to hold
back puke and laughter through that whole movie. This
is great. You'll do anything for money, won't you?

WAYNE

It wasn't a comedy.

VIOLET

You suck. And now you're sitting next to me on a bus.

WAYNE

You know when I first saw you - out there - before
I knew you could speak, I thought to myself - now
there's a girl I could really go for. She seems real.
She seems nice. I am a terrible judge of character.

Wayne sits back smugly in his seat, thinking that he's put her in her place.

VIOLET

What makes you think I'd be interested in you?

WAYNE

I don't know - let's see - you married a psychotic bore - you catch him fucking a pool boy - you don't think he's gay - you kiss dead guys. And I've known you less than a minute. But I'm sure there's more. You really think I suck?

VIOLET

You suck hard dude. And what kind of message do you think you send to the world? Do you even care? Do you even consider the consequences of your actions. Of course you don't.

SETH

It doesn't matter - he quit.

VIOLET

Who did you quit to?

WAYNE

I didn't really quit to anyone - I just quit.

VIOLET

You have to quit to someone.

WAYNE

If you're a cashier.

VIOLET

I was a cashier - and I didn't quit to anybody.

WAYNE

That doesn't make any sense.

VIOLET

I may have mis-spoken when I said 'pool boy'. He was more of a pool man - or men - but I think he or they - was - or were - from Venezuela so in his defense he - or they - didn't have a lot of body hair.

She begins to apply Mascara.

VIOLET

(continued)

And the dead guy wasn't dead when I started kissing him. Why am I explaining myself to you?

WAYNE

I have no idea.

SETH

Your chakras are starting to open. You've been oppressed by this husband for so long that your chakras closed up and now they're opening and you can't help it. Your caged soul needs to purge all that baggage that you've been accumulating.

VIOLET

I was only married for three days.

WAYNE

That's impressive.

VIOLET

Hey, those were three very long days.

The bus lurches forward, squeaking and whining as it runs through it's gears then pulsing forward with a steady hum over the Arizona highway.

Wayne's cell-phone rings. He already knows who it is as he pulls it from his coat like a gunslinger.

WAYNE

(on the phone)

Hi Allen. (Pause) Well sometimes the tabloids know things before I do. Maybe my house is bugged, I don't know. (Pause) I know – contracts. I've only been gone for two days. (Pause) How much? Wow. That's very tempting. Why would they want to give me more when I just walked out?

Wayne looks back at Seth who is disapprovingly shaking his head.

WAYNE
(continued)

But I'm not coming back. (Pause) Put me on three-way, I'll tell him myself. Hi Paul - yeah Allen told me your offer and it's very generous but...(pause) how much more?...and the jet...

Seth reaches over the seat and yanks the cell-phone out of Wayne's hand and throws it out the window. The phone skims across the street where it's crushed by an oncoming car.

Wayne turns back and stares at Seth.

WAYNE

Thanks.

SETH

What kind of jet?

WAYNE

Twenty-third Century Gulf Stream. With a pilot and a personal chef. And a doctor.

SETH

A doctor?

WAYNE

Yea. A Specialist. That's a big perk. It's unprecedented. And I've been having a little trouble peeing – so.

VIOLET

What are you afraid of ... Mackey? Is it the money, the planes, the women, death? What drives a person to throw their life down the sewer and give up fame, fortune and success? What is that?

SETH

He was in a box. He had to get out.

VIOLET

You can't get out of a box in your own jet? You're on a fucking bus dude.

WAYNE

Can I get out of the box in my own jet?

SETH

No. No. The jet's just another box. You need to become part of your own solution Wayne.

VIOLET

What the hell does that mean?

SETH

It means he can't be a part of his own problem.

VIOLET

That's the same thing.

WAYNE

Leave him alone. He makes sense.

VIOLET

Like you know.

There's a loud thud from the front of bus as it jerks to a violent stop. Toby, Wayne, Seth and Violet run out and around to the front of the bus.

EXT. BUS - SAME

A dead horse lays on it's side with one eye wide open and staring at the sun. About a hundred yards in front of the bus is a jack-knifed truck and horse trailer with the doors swung wide open. Violet starts screaming with unbridled despair and begins to vengefully kick in the front of the bus. Wayne and Seth restrain her and take her around to the stairs of the bus where they sit her down and try to get her calm. She suddenly turns eerily quiet and starting with her shoes, she systematically takes off every strip of clothing and walks naked across the highway into the desert. Seth and Wayne stare at her surprisingly perfect body as she gets smaller and smaller, finally sitting down cross-legged in the hot sand. She just sits.

SETH

Now there's something you don't see every day.

WAYNE

I've never seen a dead horse either. Are you sure I can't get out of the box in my own plane. I can guarantee you that doctor is a hot brunette too.

Wayne and Seth look back to see Toby walking toward them as two men and a very fat woman drag the dead horse about a foot at a time back up the highway toward the trailer. As they drag the horse, blood and guts run from the carcass.

TOBY

It's gonna take about four hours for a repair crew to get out. They only have one truck out here and they're on a call about two hundred miles away. Sorry. I've got some water underneath and some emergency rations if you get hungry.

He notices Violet sitting naked in the desert.

TOBY

And you all take care of her? I know she's had a hard time of it.

Wayne looks out at her with a new depth in his eyes.

WAYNE

Yeah.

TOBY

You tell her that horse was dead before we hit it. She's got enough blame in her already.

CUT TO:

EXT DESERT – SUNSET

Toby sits and watches as several small twisters bounce around in the vast distance.

TOBY

(to himself)

We're in it now – We're in it now.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT - LATER

Wayne and Seth have joined Violet in her vigil. A DESERT THUNDERSTORM spreads across the sky and pours a torrential rain as they all three sit naked in the sand. As they stare into the expanse, LIGHTNING STRIKES THE MOUNTAINS in the distance and thunder rumbles through the sky. They sit silently forming an unspoken bond.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS - SUNSET

The front end of the bus is up on jacks. A tow-truck drives away from the scene and disappears down the highway.

INT. BUS - SAME

Toby bumps his way through the open door of the bus where Wayne and Seth sit in the back. He's lugging three suitcases. Violet comes out of the bathroom draped in Wayne's coat. Not making eye contact, she sits down hard.

TOBY

Well, we have a broken axle. We're gonna be here at least 'til morning. I brought your bags in case you need anything.

With just her eyes, Violet looks up at him.

TOBY

I love horses too.

He drops their bags and goes and sits behind the steering-wheel. Violet snatches her suitcase, flips it up onto one of the seats and prepares to open it.

VIOLET

Could I get some privacy?

Wayne gets up and opens his suitcase.

WAYNE

C'mon boys. I've got some Cubans that I need to get rid of.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - SUNSET

The Arizona sun looms large just above the night before descending gently into twilight.

To Wayne, Seth and Toby, the bus is just a dark speck on the horizon. They've wandered almost a mile into the desert, all sharing the notion that Cuban cigars and female energy do not mix. They ceremonially stand in a circle and light up.

Toby takes a deep draw from the finest cigar in the world and is overcome with a pleasure he's

dreamed of, but never known. He looks up through the cloud of Cuban smoke and sees the bus in the distance, lit by candle light, glowing like a jewel against the pale desert sky.

TOBY

I'll be damned.

They all stare at the bus, awestruck.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS - LATER

From front to back, the rails under the windows are lined with lit candles - hundreds of candles, each one different than the next. The windows in the back of the bus are draped with Violet's scarves, all in shades of pink, purple and lavender.

Toby, Wayne and Seth file into the bus. They don't see Violet sitting cross-legged on the floor writing in a journal.

SETH

Trippy. And drippy.

WAYNE

She's pretty amazing.

SETH

You know what this means?

WAYNE

Yeah. No. What?

SETH

She's the candlestick maker.

VIOLET

Is there a problem with that?

Toby walks slowly toward her. Violet stands defiantly to face him. They stand nose to nose.

Toby is sweet to her.

TOBY

You take as much time as you need.

Violet throws her arms around him.

VIOLET

It wasn't your fault.

TOBY

I know baby. I know. Sometimes things just happen that's all. Things just happen.

VIOLET

I need to read this out loud. Do you mind?

The three men don't dare deny her.

WAYNE & SETH

No. No.

Violet begins to read from her journal, fighting tears.

VIOLET

*"I rode through fields of wheat and storm.
My best friend strode beneath me torn.
To carry me his pleased joy.
Careful not to destroy his spirit.*

*He loved me like his mother. A gentle soul.
I gave him everything I had.
But couldn't save him. He was gone.
I cried all night and months and years.
My tears went dry before my sorrow."*
I wrote that the day my horse died. I was ten.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINER - FLAGSTAFF ARIZONA - DAY

The bus parked outside casts a cool shadow over a tiny mom-and-pop diner alongside the desolate Arizona highway. Outside, Toby struggles to get an old pay-phone to work while Wayne, Seth and Violet are cramped into one of the three red-leather booths inside the diner. They read their greasy menus.

WAYNE

So what is it exactly about my acting that sucks?
I mean the movies, okay, I get that, but what is
it about me? I was very popular you know.

VIOLET

Could you stop talking about yourself for five minutes.

WAYNE

I'm just trying to better myself.

SETH

He is.

VIOLET

Okay, if you want to better yourself. Or you want to make yourself feel better... It's not your acting - it's you. You suck. You suck ...as a person....as a human being.

SETH

That's pretty harsh.

VIOLET

Have you ever been nice to anyone without wanting anything in return?

SETH

Wow.

WAYNE

I don't know.

VIOLET

Then you haven't. How old are you?

WAYNE

They say I can play anything from thirty to fifty. You mean how old am I really?

VIOLET

I mean everything - really. Your problem is that you have no soul. Most people on the planet have one - but you don't. You are a soulless man. And there's no way you can get one either - you either have one or you don't. And you don't. I'm hungry.

With barely enough room for the waitress to move between the tables, she squeezes through to take their order. Too many children, bad genes, hard work and the Arizona sun have made her old beyond her years. She flips open her order-pad and pulls a pencil from somewhere under her disheveled hair.

WAITRESS

What's for lunch? Hey Cookie, it's city folk!

SETH

Cheeseburger. Do you have curly fries?

WAITRESS

We have straight fries. What about you Missy?

Nobody has ever called Violet Missy and she doesn't take very well to it.

VIOLET

Do you have anything vegan?

WAITRESS

(striking a sarcastic pose)

I'm a virgin?

VIOLET

Vegan. I'll just have a salad. What kind of lettuce do you have?

WAITRESS

Plain - old - lettuce

VIOLET

You mean iceberg.

WAITRESS

This is Arizona honey. I don't think you'll find any icebergs around here.

The cook behind the counter, creepily laughs out loud at her bad joke.

VIOLET

I'll have a cup of piping hot water.

The waitress looks over at Wayne who has forgotten to put on his disguise.

WAITRESS

How 'bout you sugar?

WAYNE

I'll have a club sandwich with extra bacon.

WAITRESS

Hey, you're Wayne Mackey Jr.. Cookie, it's Wayne Mackey Jr., the movie star. You were so good in *Day of Judgment*.

VIOLET

No! No he wasn't. He was horrific in that film. Did you know that he was supposed to be an officer in the Royal Air Force? He slapped on a *Scottish* accent - the worst ever by the way to hide that fact that he has absolutely no talent, an abysmal sense of truth and zero chemistry with any other human being on the planet.

WAYNE

Could I get a Diet Fresca with that?

EXT. DINER - SAME

Toby looks discouraged as he hangs up the phone and opens the diner's wood framed screen-door. Equipped with a small rusted bell and woven with duct-tape and fishing line, the door barely holds together as Toby lets the wind slam it behind him. He squeezes into the booth next to Violet who rhythmically dips a worn out tea-bag (and her fingers) into her luke-warm cup of water.

WAYNE

What did they say?

TOBY

Bus number sixty eight is out of commission.

VIOLET

What does that mean?

TOBY

That means that they send another bus to get you and they tow this one *and me* back to the yard.

VIOLET

Our bus works just fine.

TOBY

The law says they gotta take it back.

SETH

I can't go on another bus. *This* is my bus.

TOBY

Yeah – I know - I've driven that bus since she came off the line twenty years ago. I would have turned over one million miles on her if we'd have gone all the way through to Idaho. We been through a lot. You have no idea.

WAYNE

How much for the bus?

TOBY

What?

WAYNE

Money. How much do you want for the bus?

TOBY

It's not my bus.

WAYNE

Then I'll give you ten thousand dollars to drive us to - where are we going?

SETH

Franklin Idaho. Take it.

WAYNE

Ten thousand dollars to drive us to Franklin Idaho.

TOBY

It's not my bus.

WAYNE

Twenty thousand. You can turn over a million miles.

TOBY

I'm thirty two days from promotion.

WAYNE

Fifty thousand.

TOBY

Done.

Toby looks into the distance and sees a tornado miles away. He gives a knowing wink in it's direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The bus rolls down the highway with Violet's scarves filtering out the open windows.

INT. BUS - SAME

As if suspended in time, the once cascading wax from Violet's candles hangs like icicles from the ledges of the bus windows. Toby is focused as he maneuvers the bus through the twisting curves of a mountainous Northern Arizona highway. Even with headphones firmly over his ears, music leaks through into the bus.

Violet lays day-dreaming across Wayne and Seth's laps as they doze in their seats. The frantic sound of a car-horn honking wakes them from their light sleep. They look out the window. Toby can't hear a thing and continues to deliberately navigate through the mountain pass.

Blasting it's horn, a topless yellow Corvette convertible swings along-side the bus into the oncoming traffic lane. A giant costume chicken head is on the passenger seat.

VIOLET

Shit. That's Mr. Bains – my ... husband.
What does he want?

Mr. Bains points at Violet while waving his hand up and down.

SETH

He wants you to roll down the window.

Jonathan Bains manages to stay with the bus curve for curve while not taking his eyes off of Violet. Seth struggles to get the window to go down just about a foot, allowing Violet to poke her head out sideways. She yells across the highway.

VIOLET

Go away.

He just stares at her as he whips the Vette around another sharp curve.

VIOLET
(yelling)

You're going to kill yourself.

Mr. Bains pulls a gun from under the seat and aims it straight at Violet. Wayne and Seth duck down below the glass trying to pull Violet down with them but her head is stuck - wedged in the window.

ON TOBY:

With it's emergency flashers blinking, Toby sees a stalled black Cadillac about a hundred yards ahead in the on-coming traffic lane. He briefly looks to his left to see that it's a disabled Hearse sitting with it's hood up in the middle of the lane. He sees that there's no one in the Hearse as he passes by, he then quickly refocuses on the road as he approaches another curve.

ON THE CORVETTE:

Just as Mr. Bains raises the gun to shoot, his car smashes head-on into the Hearse, practically disintegrating the Corvette on impact. The sound is explosive and terrifying. Wayne, Seth and Violet watch in horror as a casket is ejected from the back of the Hearse and careens end-over-end down the side of the steep mountain, disappearing into a deep ravine. The bus takes another sharp curve and the horrific scene vanishes behind them. Five Harleys rush by.

ON TOBY:

Toby briefly stops whistling whatever he's listening to on his head-phones. He glances back for a brief check on his passengers, oblivious as to what just took place.

TOBY

Everybody awake back there?

In shock, they all quietly nod. As Toby is looking back, the costume chicken head lands on the hood of the bus for a moment, then rolls away.

TOBY

We'll be in Flagstaff in about five minutes. They've got a nice little tavern there, with a waitress named Daisy. Don't get me wrong now, we just talk - but it's good talk - music - poetry - philosophy. Listen, my wife's a wonderful woman but she thinks Plato's' a big dog at Disneyland.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

A small man in a black suit stands hopefully by the side of the road as bus number sixty eight draws closer. He's Jake Alcott, a mortician and (unbeknownst to him) the owner of a mangled Hearse and a missing casket. Toby stops the bus and opens the doors to let the man on.

TOBY

That your Cadillac?

JAKE

Unfortunately, yes. The Hearse has a long and tempestuous relationship with Cadillac. Sure they were prestigious - that was before the Germans got into the act. Now it's Mercedes all the way. I say 'in with the old and out with the new.' That's an old morticians joke. I'm Jacob Alcott. Jake.

TOBY

Name's Toby. Climb *abroad* Jake - that's an old bus-driver's joke.

JAKE

Do you think you could take me into Flagstaff, I need a new water pump pretty quickly. We have to bury my passenger today. You know us Jews.

TOBY

No I don't - but I'll take your word. Climb on in. Flagstaff's only a few miles up the road. I'm sure your passenger will be fine. That's my business - passengers.

CUT TO:

INT. TAVERN - AFTERNOON

Animal heads line the walls of the small tavern, many with baseball caps and cowboy hats hanging from their dusty antlers - one with a dart stuck between its eyes. Toby sits in a booth in a dark corner talking with Daisy, the waitress. Daisy is a young black woman with a warm smile and an inviting personality.

Wayne, Seth and Violet sit at the bar waiting for the disgruntled bartender to finish the last few bites of his hamburger. Behind the bar, windows look out over the deserted street. Across the street, the bus is

parked in front of a small roadside motel. They watch as a tow truck passes the bar. Jake is waving and smiling from the passenger seat as the tow truck disappears down the road.

WAYNE

We should have said something?

SETH

He'll find out soon enough.

WAYNE

What if they think somebody stole the coffin and they never look for it?

SETH

What's meant to be will be.

WAYNE

I think we should have said something.

VIOLET

I can't believe Mr. Bains wanted to kill me. He said he loved me. That's not love.

Licking his fingers, the bartender finally comes over to take their order. He obviously hasn't been in the mood to work in some years. Jesse Kramer has been tending bar since he was fifteen years old. He's forty.

JESSE

Whatsit it be?

WAYNE

I'll have an Amsterdam light.

JESSE

A what?

WAYNE

How 'bout a Heineken.

JESSE

We have Bud, Coors and Miller Lite. And we're out of Miller Lite.

WAYNE

Bring us a round of Coors and get that guy over there whatever he wants.

JESSE

Gotta tell the waitress that.

WAYNE

Where's the waitress?

JESSE

With that guy over there.

VIOLET

Look just get us our beers and go see what that gentleman wants. And stop licking your fingers.

Jesse stops licking his fingers and leans down on the bar. He stares coldly into Violet's eyes. He slowly and deliberately works his entire fist into his mouth and rolls his tongue around and through his fingers. He pulls his wet fist from his mouth.

JESSE

Now I'll get your beers.

He's in no hurry as he walks to the other end of the bar.

WAYNE

(to Violet)

You've got quite a way with people.

VIOLET

He said he loved me.

WAYNE

You do realize that he's dead.

VIOLET

What?

SETH

His car disintegrated.

WAYNE

And there was an explosion.

SETH

A big explosion.

WAYNE

And a fire.

VIOLET

Oh my God. (a slight smile) Oh my God.

Jesse returns and puts all three beers down in front of Wayne.

JESSE

That's six fifty.

WAYNE

How much are they?

JESSE

I said - six fifty.

WAYNE

I mean a piece. How can three beers add up to six fifty.

JESSE

Three beers are six fifty cause we sell a six pack for thirteen dollars - what's half of thirteen?

SETH

That's six fifty.

WAYNE

So how much is one beer.

JESSE

You didn't order one beer. You ordered three beers and it's six fifty.

SETH

He makes an intriguing point.

WAYNE

What if we all paid separately.

JESSE

Too late.

SETH

A mathematical conundrum.

Wayne pulls a twenty out of his wallet and tosses it up on the bar.

WAYNE

Keep the change.

Without even looking at the bill, Jesse slides it off the bar, bypasses the cash register and stuffs it directly into his tip jar. He pulls a rumpled pack of cigarettes from his tee-shirt pocket as he gives a single swift tug to the dirty piece of rope that rings the tip bell. He goes and sits on a worn red-leather stool at the end of the bar and lights up.

WAYNE

You got another smoke?

Jesse pulls the pack from his pocket, takes out his last cigarette, slides it behind his ear, crumples the pack and throws it into the trash can.

JESSE

Nope.

WAYNE

Do you sell cigarettes here?

JESSE

Nope.

WAYNE

Anywhere around here?

JESSE

Nope.

WAYNE

I'll give you a hundred dollars for that one behind your ear.

Jesse pulls the cigarette from behind his ear.

JESSE

A hundred dollars for this cigarette.

WAYNE

One hundred dollars.

JESSE

Listen mister. I don't know who the hell you think you are but I ain't nobody's bitch.

He grabs Wayne by the shirt and pulls him up out of his stool. He begins to become enraged.

JESSE

You think you can buy me? You think I'm just some low life piece of shit? How would you like me to cut your nuts off?

He pulls a large butcher knife from behind the bar, holding Wayne up with one hand.

WAYNE

No thank you. I'm sorry.

Jesse pushes him back down onto his stool. He crumbles the cigarette on the bar in front of Wayne, walks back to his stool and casually begins to read the newspaper.

WAYNE

I didn't mean to insult you.

Jesse glares over at Wayne.

VIOLET

He doesn't like you.

WAYNE

Everybody likes me. You set him off with your finger licking comment. Why is he so violent?

VIOLET

People only pretend you like you - because they want something. He doesn't want anything.

WAYNE

(to Seth)

That's not true. Is that true?

SETH

Most people value money and status above anything else and want to be close to it. It's fame and fortune by association.

VIOLET

And you want love and acceptance from them. It's a classic co-parasitic existence.

WAYNE

(to Violet)

What about you?

VIOLET

What about me?

WAYNE

Are you my friend - or do you want something?

VIOLET

I'm still grieving.

WAYNE

Seth?

SETH

We're two parts of the same organism. Technically we can't be friends.

Wayne has a moment of realization.

WAYNE

Nobody *really* likes me.

VIOLET

Did someone try to kill you today?

WAYNE

I'm serious. I don't have one true friend.

From behind his newspaper.

JESSE

I'll be your friend.

WAYNE

I'm sorry - didn't you just offer to cut my nuts off.

JESSE

But you were polite. Not too many people have manners. When I offered to cut you're nuts off you said 'no thank you' - I appreciate that.

WAYNE

I don't really know you that well...so.

JESSE

I see.

WAYNE

No - there's no I see. I've got nothing against you. Friendships need to be nurtured and trust needs to be built. Bonds need to form.

VIOLET

Shit - no wonder you don't have any friends.

WAYNE

(to Jesse)

Come with us then.

VIOLET

What? No! No, no.

WAYNE

Come with us. We're headed into our unknown futures in ... where?

SETH

Franklin Idaho.

WAYNE

Franklin Idaho.

JESSE

Idaho?

The dart falls out of the moose-head and sticks with a thud into the soft wood floor.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAVERN - MORNING

Carrying a large green duffel-bag, a bottle of Bacardi 151 and puffing down the last few drags of a cigarette, Jesse comes out the front door of the tavern. Wayne, Seth and Violet gape curiously out the windows of the bus. Jesse yells up to Toby who holds an impatient idle behind the wheel.

JESSE

Just a minute.

Not quite running, Jess's gangly legs whisk him back toward the tavern. He slinks in the front door and back out again *without* the Bacardi. Before slamming the door for the last time, he lights a road flair with the butt of his lit cigarette and tosses it back into the tavern. As if he hasn't a care in the world, he shuffles from the tavern door to the bus in twice the time it should take him. He climbs up onto the bus and the doors close behind him.

The bus pulls away from the tavern and disappears down the road and over the crest of the highway.

The buses' absence leaves a lingering silence that's finally broken by the sound of the old wooden tavern bursting into flames. The tavern burns.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUS - DAY

Jess's bare ass is the focus of attention as he demonstrates how his tattoo of Bugs Bunny leaps from the butt-cheek into the butt-crack with one well practiced flex.

VIOLET

Who did this to you?

JESSE

A carny. His name was Fish - or Danny. He pierced my scrotum with a McDonald's straw. He was paralyzed and worked with a helper monkey. Damnedest thing you've ever seen. That little monkey could hold a grown man down for a full ten seconds. And then, if you tried to stand up, he'd shit into his tiny monkey hands and threaten to rub it in your face. It was awesome.

A small bell rings from somewhere between Jess's legs as he jerks his pants back up.

JESSE

School's out.

Jesse reclines into his seat and rubs his hands together in imagined anticipation.

JESSE

So what's everybody gonna do with their share of the gold?

SETH

There's no gold.

JESSE

There's no gold?

WAYNE

There's no gold.

Jesse looks over at Violet and licks his lips.

JESSE

Are we gonna repopulate the earth?

VIOLET

Don't even let him look at me.

JESSE

We gotta do something' big. What are we gonna do?

WAYNE

We're going to Idaho. To find ourselves.

JESSE

That's it?

SETH

That's it.

JESSE

I've been behind a bar for thirty fucking years. I've never even been to – anywhere. We're goon' to Idaho!

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. TAVERN - SAME - IN ASHES

The five Harleys race right through the smoldering rubble that was the tavern, leaving a huge cloud of black dust and burning cinders in their wake.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORN FIELD – NIGHT

A billion stars light a moonless Arizona night. The bus has cut a narrow path into a corn field. Toby

sleeps, slumped over the steering wheel snoring as Seth and Violet make-out across the back row of seats. Wayne and Jesse lay on the top of the bus gazing up at the vast blanket of stars.

JESSE

I was always waiting for something to happen. Nothing's happened. I started tending bar when I was fifteen. I'm forty. I barely remember any of it. I drank since I was six. My grandpa used to make beet wine in the cellar and me and my brother Ernie would go down and drink. Six years old. Ernie's dead. His liver gave out about five years ago. He was forty. But I always thought something' would come along. I thought I was a late bloomer. But I was just a drunk. And now I'm goon' to Idaho - That's where Ernie lived. This bus goes right through the town that he lived in - I checked it on the map before we left. He has two kids - I never met 'em.

WAYNE

You should go. See his kids.

JESSE

No.

WAYNE

We'll go.

JESSE

I wouldn't want 'em to see how I turned out.

The whir of crickets fills the awkward silence between them.

WAYNE

I wanted to be an astronaut - but I was too tall.

JESSE

So you became a movie star.

WAYNE

Yeah.

JESSE

That's rough.

WAYNE

Yeah.

JESSE

People should be able to be whatever they want to be.

WAYNE

I know.

JESSE

Sometimes I think the world just tries to keep us down. You know?

WAYNE

I know. You know I lost Pulp Fiction to Travolta.

JESSE

I never saw that.

WAYNE

You'd like it. It reminds me of you.

JESSE

That's what I'm talking' about. Why should John Travolta get a part and you don't?

WAYNE

That's what I say.

JESSE

Once I was akin' a crap at a bar down in Tuscan and a snake came up out of the toilet and went right up my poop-shoot. Had to lure it out with a live mouse.

WAYNE

Life.

JESSE

I'm sorry you couldn't be an astronaut.

WAYNE

Look at all those stars. It makes me feel so small and insignificant.

JESSE

Me too.

WAYNE

Maybe I'll get there someday.

JESSE

Probably not.

WAYNE

I like you Jesse - you're a realist.

JESSE

Most people find me offensive.

WAYNE

You just say what's on your mind is all.

JESSE

No.

WAYNE

Yea you do. And you're not afraid of what people think of you either.

JESSE

That's true.

WAYNE

And if you want to do something - God dammit - you do it.

JESSE

I do.

WAYNE

You're your own man. I wish I could be more like you.

JESSE

Really?

WAYNE

Yea.

JESSE

Huh. That makes me not want to kill myself for the first time in a while.

WAYNE

You think about that?

JESSE

Every day. But I figure I'll die soon enough.

WAYNE

I'm sorry you're a drunk.

JESSE

Me too.

The bus starts gently rocking back and forth as Violets soft moans drift through the night like perfume.

JESSE

I thought she was *your* girlfriend.

WAYNE

We just met yesterday.

JESSE

You looked like you belonged together.

WAYNE

Well it's too late now.

JESSE

You should stop 'em.

WAYNE

It's none of my business.

JESSE

If you love her you should stop 'em.

WAYNE

I just met her yesterday. I don't love her.

JESSE

So.

WAYNE

You can't stop people in the middle of sex.

JESSE

I have. Women love it.

WAYNE

Right in the middle?

JESSE

Right in the middle. They feel like they're ban' rescued.

Wayne makes his decision as Violet's moans become more intense.

WAYNE

Jesse, you inspire me.

INT. BUS - SAME

Seth and Violet are going at it full force. Violet is on top, making Wayne think twice about the rescue scenario as he stands over them. Wayne goes unobserved, silently watching as they finish in a crescendo of mutual pleasure. Finally looking up into his face, Violet pretends not to see the pain in Wayne's eyes. She continues to lay on top of Seth.

VIOLET

Where's your creepy new friend? Didn't he want to watch too?

WAYNE

He told me come and rescue you.

VIOLET

Rescue me from what?

Seth's transition from sexual to philosophical is startling.

SETH

From yourself.

VIOLET

Shut up.

Violet puts the remainder of her body weight on him as he struggles to speak.

SETH

You're obviously in love with him - and you're just taking it out on me.

Violet's vulnerability suddenly becomes apparent to her.

VIOLET

You prick. Taking it out on you?!

She scrambles up, straightens her clothes and storms out of the bus.

SETH

Now you can rescue her.

WAYNE

You shouldn't have said that.

SETH

Always say what's true.

WAYNE

Not if it hurts people.

SETH

You do love her.

WAYNE

If I do - I don't like it.

SETH

Love's a chemical that ultimately wears off - so I don't get too attached to it.

WAYNE

What should I do?

SETH

If it were me?

WAYNE

If it were you.

SETH

If it were me I'd win her trust, have sex, and then pawn her off on you. But that's just me. So go.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS - DAWN

The bus races past a sign welcoming them to the great state of Oklahoma.

INT. BUS - SAME

Scattered about the inside of the bus about as far away from each other as they can get, Wayne, Seth and Violet stretch out asleep across their seats. Wayne is jarred awake as the bus hits a small sink-hole in the road. The road smooths out again. Wayne groggily makes his way to the front of the bus. He passes Violet and then Seth, both sleeping. He looks back behind him like he's forgotten something and as if to clear his mind, shakes his head. He startles Toby as he taps him on the shoulder.

WAYNE

Sorry.

TOBY

Thought you was all dead back there.

WAYNE

How long have we been asleep?

TOBY

We've been on the road about six hours.

WAYNE

Where are we?

TOBY

Oklahoma.

WAYNE

What happened to New Mexico.

TOBY

You missed New Mexico. Just as well.

Toby pulls the bus over in a very small town, in front of a general store. There is a small local bank across the street. Toby gets out and goes into the store.

TOBY

I'm gonna pick up a few things.

Seth is staring out the window and sees something going on through the large front windows of the bank. A bank robber with a shotgun is holding six people at gunpoint. Seth calls Violet and Wayne over.

SETH

That guy's robbing the bank.

VIOLET

Call 911.

WAYNE

Seth threw my phone out the window.

VIOLET

We have to do something.

SETH

There's nothing we can do.

A sudden determination comes over Wayne.

WAYNE

I can do something.

Wayne gets up to leave the bus.

VIOLET

Wayne – no!

WAYNE

I can do something.

Wayne steps out of the bus and boldly crosses the street, and without hesitation, walks directly into the bank.

Seth and Violet watch in stunned silence as Wayne approaches the Bank Robber. He's huge.

The Bank Robber turns the shotgun toward Wayne.

BANK ROBBER

Now who the hell are you?

Wayne grabs the barrel of the shotgun, disarms the bank robber, and with one amazing commando move, knocks him unconscious with the butt of the gun.

WAYNE
(looking down at him)
I'm Wayne Mackey Jr. - Sexiest man alive.

Seth and Violet run across the street and into the bank. Violet runs up and hugs Wayne.

VIOLET
(hugging him)
You idiot.

SETH
Wow.

Wayne looks suddenly petrified at the thought of doing what he just did. He lightly kicks the bank robber and pokes him with the shotgun.

WAYNE
(to a hostage)
Maybe you could put him in the vault or something.

SETH
That was amazing.

Wayne doesn't want to talk about it. He becomes introspective.

WAYNE
You think you know why I quit movies
don't you? Oh – he's a spoiled little baby
who only thinks about himself. He had it
all and he threw it all away. Well you don't
know anything. And you don't know me.
I really wanted to see New Mexico. Me and
Jesse were gonna walk barefoot on the
sand at White Sands. And he was gonna show
me where he was standing when they tested the
last atomic bomb.

Wayne cocks the shotgun, emptying the chamber and suddenly gets a dumbfounded look on his face.

VIOLET
Jesse?

WAYNE
Where's Jesse?

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS - LATER

On top of the bus Toby kneels next to Jess's lifeless body, his wrist hanging limp in Toby's trembling hand. Wayne, Seth and Violet stand helplessly below as they hear Jess's dead hand hit the aluminum roof of the bus.

CUT TO:

INT. MORTUARY - DAY

Surrounded by caskets, Wayne and Seth sit in a large room waiting for the mortician. Seth gets up and begins to carefully inspect one of the coffins. He cautiously lifts the lid and caresses the velvety lining inside. He feels the soft satin pillow. He closes the lid and checks the seal to make sure it's tight. He opens the lid again and pulls it up and down a few times. The mortician enters.

MORTICIAN

That's our most comfortable model. It's called the eternal flame.

SETH

It's beautiful.

MORTICIAN

I know. Your loved one will enjoy eternal comfort.

WAYNE

What's your least comfortable? He was a simple man.

MORTICIAN

That would be the traditional pine box.

WAYNE

We'll take that.

MORTICIAN

Your loved one will enjoy the simplicity.

WAYNE

I'm sure he will.

MORTICIAN

We should talk about flowers.

WAYNE

No flowers.

MORTICIAN

No flowers?

WAYNE

He hated flowers. Could we just pay? What do we have - the plot, the coffin...

MORTICIAN

The non-denominational Minister.

WAYNE

Okay.

MORTICIAN

And the digger. We don't have our own back-hoe. It's a total of thirty two thousand and fourteen dollars.

SETH

What would happen if the eternal flame went off the side of a cliff?

MORTICIAN

Why would it go off of a cliff?

SETH

Hypothetically.

MORTICIAN

They're specifically designed to be *in* the ground. I don't think that any coffin, regardless of it's esthetic integrity, would survive a cliff.

Wayne takes out a credit card.

WAYNE

Could we pay?

MORTICIAN

He only had sixty four dollars. Normally that would go to next of kin.

The mortician hands the money to Wayne and takes his credit card. Wayne hands the money back.

WAYNE

Keep it.

SETH

Would you mind if I tried this out?

MORTICIAN

Help yourself.

Seth climbs into the Eternal Flame casket.

SETH

This is very comfortable.

MORTICIAN

It's designed for perpetual tranquility.

WAYNE

Put it on the card too.

MORTICIAN

Excuse me.

WAYNE

We'll take that coffin.

MORTICIAN

It's twenty thousand dollars.

Wayne takes out a different credit card and hands it to the mortician.

WAYNE

Better put it on this one then.

SETH

Thank you Wayne.

WAYNE

Life's for the living - right?

MORTICIAN

No one's actually ever taken one out before.

SETH
It's okay - we have a bus.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH – DAY

Seth enters the empty church through large stained glass doors. The creek of the doors echos through the emptiness.

SETH
Hello.

His voice echos.

Seth walks awkwardly down the center isle of the church and stares up at the giant crucifix above the alter. He addresses it.

SETH
Hello. Sorry. I'm half Italian and half Jewish – so -
Sorry.

Seth sits for a moment and then hears a cough from one of the confession booths.

SETH
Hello.

He hears another cough and approaches the booth.

SETH
Can I come in?

The voice in the Priest's booth is raspy.

VOICE
Sure man.

Seth shrugs and enters the confession booth. He sits on the kneel er. He hears a long bong hit come from the other side of the screened window, but it doesn't seem to bother him. A cloud of smoke billows through the screen.

SETH
Well – Here I am again. Nothing's changed
really. I'm stuck in the same job and I still don't
really think I'm qualified. I'm not moving up in

the organization and I'm feeling like I never will.
The resentment is making me intolerant of my
coworkers, and I think I'm going to have an episode.
I don't want to have another episode. I really need your
dogma right now. You know. Rules and such.
This job is killing me man. It's killing me. Everybody
gets what they want except me.

He hears another bong hit, a cough, and then a door slam.

INT. CHURCH – SAME

A fifteen year old skate-board punk comes rolling out of the priest's side of the confessional. With a board flip and a couple of hard kicks, he skates down the center isle of the church and out the front door, riding the handrail down the stairs of the church.

INT. CHURCH – SAME

Seth comes out of the confessional. He sees the door of the church wide open.

SETH
(to himself)
Everybody gets what they want – except me.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

In a quaint suburban Oklahoma cemetery, Jess's casket is about to be lowered into the ground. Wayne, Seth, Violet and Toby are the only onlookers. A generic preacher is saying some prayers over the grave but no one's really listening.

VIOLET
It was nice of you to do this for him.

WAYNE
He was my friend - kind of.

SETH
How long do you think he was dead?

TOBY
The coroner said he was dead before we left
Oklahoma - said it was probably his liver.

WAYNE
Just like Ernie.

VIOLET

Who's Ernie?

WAYNE

His brother.

SETH

He had a brother?

WAYNE

He lived in Idaho. Has two kids.

VIOLET

I didn't know you knew so much about him.

WAYNE

His liver gave out when he was forty - just like Jesse. You know he had to lure a snake out of his ass with a live mouse.

SETH

He was a good man.

TOBY

A fine man.

Violet shrugs.

WAYNE

Where do you think we go when we die?

VIOLET

Good go to heaven. Bad go to hell.

SETH

Duality is for suckers. There's no heaven and hell. Everything in the universe is in perfect balance. Only perception changes. Not perfection.

WAYNE

You didn't answer the question.

SETH

What was it?

WAYNE

Where do we go when we die?

SETH

If you're Jesse - right here. There's no mystical, magical boundary between life and death. They exist simultaneously.

VIOLET

Shut up Seth.

SETH

You'll see.

VIOLET

What about you Wayne? Where do we go?

WAYNE

I don't know. I don't have a soul.

INT. BUS - DAY

Seth and Violet sit on either side of Wayne who lays face up in the open coffin that's wedged into the aisle of the bus. Toby pilots his way across the expansive Oklahoma prairie.

WAYNE

This is where we go when we die.

VIOLET

Do you have to lay in there?

WAYNE

It's really comfortable. It's designed for perpetual tranquility.

VIOLET

It's creeping' me out.

SETH

Everyone deals with death in their own way.

VIOLET

Shut up. I'm still very mad at you.

SETH

I'm sorry I had sex with you.

Violet gives him the dirtiest look she can without seeming to care.

SETH

I mean I'm sorry it wasn't Wayne.

VIOLET

Oh you're not half as sorry as I am. At least Wayne could have faked some emotion.

WAYNE

I'm still alive here.

SETH

Do you want me to lie. I'm not like him - I can't bullshit my way through life - inflicting pain - Unraveling the fabric of society.

WAYNE

Still alive.

VIOLET

You think you know everything about everyone. Why don't you take a look in the mirror. I'm sure Wayne has one on him.

Wayne closes the coffin lid.

SETH

Why don't you just admit you love him and get on with your life.

VIOLET

The first time I saw him - the very first time I literally vomited. His face popped up on the screen at the Pepper tree theater and I just spontaneously threw up. It was like I saw Satan.

SETH

That sounds like love to me.

Toby yells back to them.

TOBY

We got some weather ahead. I'm gonna pull over for a while.

Wayne pops up out of the coffin.

CUT TO:

BACK ROOM – BIKER BAR – SAME

A huge portrait of Mick Jagger dawns an entire wall of the bar. Dozens of bikers kneel in front of the portrait, holding up flaming shots of Wild Turkey. Raising their glasses high, they recite the entire lyric to Sympathy For The Devil in a prayer like chant... We cut in and out biker bar scenes as they chant...

BIKERS CHANTING IN UNISON

Please allow me to introduce myself
I'm a man of wealth and taste
I've been around for a long, long year
Stole many a mans soul and faith
And I was round when Jesus Christ
Had his moment of doubt and pain
Made damn sure that Pilate
Washed his hands and sealed his fate
Pleased to meet you
Hope you guess my name
But what's puzzling you
Is the nature of my game

as they chant, on the other side of the room ... a young woman, so heavily tattooed that we can't see that she's naked, is being gang raped/initiated on the pool table in the middle of the bar. Dozens of filthy bikers continue to rape the young woman as other bikers hurl shots of flaming Wild Turkey at the rape pile, as others urinate on the young woman to ensure she doesn't catch fire. She seems to be loving it and cheering them on. At the end of the rape, the young woman stands on the pool table with a cue stick in her hand and begins hooting and hollering as if she had just won something. Stark naked and smoldering wet, she begins to twirl around, wielding the pool cue like a sword. She cracks one of the bikers in the head and opens a large gash that begins to bleed profusely. He falls to the floor and covers his face with his hands. The woman jumps on him and straddles him cowgirl style. She peels his hands from his face. The woman spits in his face and yells to the crowd. She squeals.

WOMAN

This one's mine y'all !!!

CUT TO:

INT. BIKER BAR – BACK ROOM - SAME

Five bikers sit around a make-shift pen where two snapping turtles battle. A pile of hundred dollar bills lay on the floor as the turtles lunge at one another. A jukebox in the corner begins to play You Might

Think I'm Foolish by The Cars. Within seconds one of the bikers pulls a sawed off shotgun from his jacket and blows the jukebox to bits, sending the turtles momentarily into their shells. They begin talking.

BIKER #1

I have a hair in my throat.

BIKER #3

Shut up and eat your turtle.

Biker #2 looks down to see that one of the fighting turtles is cooked and on a plate in front of him, served in it's own shell. The other turtle struts victoriously around the pen. He takes a bite.

BIKER #3

This tastes nothing like chicken.

The bikers look at the dead turtle and all start laughing. Their laughing turns to slapping and pushing which eventually erupts into an all out brawl.

BACK TO:

EXT. BUS - SAME

Suddenly baseball sized hail-stones rain down outside, bombarding the bus. Inside, it sounds like they've driven into a war zone. Toby yells back to them again.

TOBY

I'm gonna try to make that tunnel. The hair on the back of my neck's standing' up - that's the sign.

SETH

Of what?

TOBY

Tornado.

WAYNE

No. No tornado.

TOBY

The hair's never wrong.

Seth gets very excited.

SETH

We should have buried him in eternal comfort! He's pissed off.

The sound inside the bus is nearly deafening as Toby races the bus toward the tunnel. Suddenly darkness and silence.

WAYNE

What happened?

VIOLET

We're in a tunnel. Don't be such a baby.
It's just wind.

Seth is genuinely disappointed.

SETH

It's not over, is it?

TOBY

Don't worry. Wait three seconds - two - one.

The bus starts shaking and rocking violently and it sounds like a freight-train is coming right at them.

VIOLET

Holy shit.

Toby sees the light at the end of the tunnel go black.

TOBY

Hold on to something'.

The bus and everyone in it becomes momentarily weightless, lifting off the ground and turning about thirty degrees, hitting the inside wall of the tunnel. Within that moment, the door violently bursts open and one of the back windows is sucked out, along with everything that isn't nailed down. The bus free-falls back down to the ground with extraordinary force. Suddenly it's light. There's a still calm. Everything goes quiet. Toby continues hugging the steering wheel with all his strength. Wayne and Seth clutch their seats. Violet is obviously missing and the next few moments grow extremely tense.

WAYNE

Violet! Violet!

SETH

She's gone.

WAYNE

Violet!

SETH

She must have got sucked out.

As the dust begins to settle, Wayne puts his head in his hands and sits down on the closed coffin.

WAYNE

God damn it. I finally fall in love with a girl and she gets sucked out.

Wayne begins to cry but stops as he hears a knocking coming from under his butt. He jumps up and opens the coffin. Violet is staring back up at him, confused.

VIOLET

You're in love with me?

WAYNE

No.

SETH

Of course he is.

VIOLET

You were crying because you thought I got sucked out.

SETH

He was.

WAYNE

I spent thirty thousand dollars on a funeral for a complete stranger - and a weird one at that. I bought Seth a coffin. And I gave up fame and fortune to ride on a bus to... where?

SETH

Franklin Idaho.

WAYNE

So what I say or do is completely irrelevant. It means nothing.

VIOLET

Before - when I said you have no soul. I was wrong - I apologize for that. You probably do have a soul.

WAYNE

I accept your apology.

VIOLET

A very good soul. It took a lot of guts to do what you did.

Toby hasn't moved. He's still hugging the steering-wheel with all his might.

TOBY

Everyone all right back there. That was a big one. I've run this route for thirty years and that was the biggest one yet.

Toby pries himself from the steering-wheel and goes out to check for damage.

Violet chokes down some pride.

VIOLET

You may even actually be a human being. You just don't know how to show it.

WAYNE

I can't be in love.

VIOLET

Why?

WAYNE

I'm probably responsible, single handedly responsible for people being murdered. And as horrible as that is, the only thing I can think about is me. My career. What people think of me. I should hate myself, but I don't. I feel sorry for myself. And I think I love myself so much, that there's no room in my heart for anyone else.

Seth's nature won't allow him to pass up an opportunity to inject his insight.

SETH

So what are you afraid of?

Wayne has a moment of clarity.

WAYNE

I'm afraid of everything.

Wayne starts to laugh.

WAYNE
(laughing)

I'm afraid of living a normal life – I can't.

SETH

And you were pretending to live so you thought you were living. Your whole life was based on pretending and killing other people that weren't you. You were pretending to live.

WAYNE
(still laughing)

I was pretending to live.

SETH

And now you're living.

Wayne stops laughing and looks up at Violet, confused.

WAYNE
(to Violet)

Am I? Cause it doesn't feel like it.

SETH

Living - not pretending.. Let's go look at the devastation.

Violet becomes terrified.

VIOLET

We can't go through there.

SETH

Let's go through - we've got nothing. We've got nothing to lose.

Wayne stares out the tunnel at the future.

WAYNE

It's page sixty.

SETH

What's that?

WAYNE

Page sixty - of a movie script. The turning point.

SETH

Does it have to be page sixty? Can it be fifty eight or sixty five.

WAYNE

It's around page sixty. Every page represents one minute of screen time so you're an hour in and you find out what the movie is all about. It's the turning point.

SETH

And what happens?

WAYNE

It depends on what kind of movie it is.

SETH

What if this were a movie? What would happen when we got to the other side.

WAYNE

If it were one of my movies, there'd be a few hundred dead bodies on the other side.

VIOLET

Well I don't want to know what happens.

WAYNE

You have to want to know. Everybody wants to know what happens.

They begin to walk.

VIOLET

Nothing good ever happens.

CUT TO:

EXT. TUNNEL - DAY

Wayne leads the way as the threesome emerge from the tunnel on foot. Toby drives a few yards behind them, inching along, testing the bus's mechanics, (gears, brakes, etc.) The vast Oklahoma prairie spreads before them. Except for a large Sycamore tree that's been stripped to the bark by the tornado there's nothing but short prairie-grass as far as the eye can see.

SETH

Nothing. Very disappointing.

VIOLET

I'll bet you love the bible – do you love the bible?

SETH

I read it for historical reference. Why?

VIOLET

Because people who love death and destruction read the bible.

SETH

I do love Revelation.

VIOLET

Because it's about the destruction of the earth and most everybody on it. And people who are so afraid of getting up and getting on with their lives - they love to live in this passive fantasy where the end of the world saves them from all their self induced misery. Talk about fear of living. You're the one that's afraid - he's just a hansom idiot.

Seth reflects for a moment.

SETH

I'm not afraid. What about rub-a-dub-dub.

VIOLET

The nursery rhyme?

SETH

Yeah. I jumped out of my rotten potato.

VIOLET

You didn't base your life on that nursery rhyme?

SETH

It's a great metaphor.

VIOLET

You've got three guys that have good professions - at least by the standards of the day - and they all think their lives are so bad that they bail out and end up in a tiny little bathtub together - all crammed in there naked in what has to be filthy, cold water.

They thought they'd find something better than they had - they weren't content - and look what happened to them.

SETH

Shit.

VIOLET

Three grown men washing each other.

SETH

You're right.

VIOLET

And you should examine yourself instead of examining everyone else. Fucked up people never know they're fucked up. They always think everyone else is.

SETH

I'm not that fucked up.

VIOLET

The less fucked up you think you are - the more you are.

SETH

I don't think so.

VIOLET

Because you are. And so am I.

SETH

How could we not know that?

VIOLET

We couldn't. Do you think stupid know they're stupid... no - cause they're too stupid to know.

SETH

So if you think you are fucked up then you're not?

VIOLET

Nobody thinks they are.

SETH

Then everybody is?

VIOLET

Everybody is.

WAYNE

This is beautiful. There's nothing for miles.
Except that tree.

Seth and Violet watch as Wayne races full speed through the short prairie-grass to the bare Sycamore about a hundred yards away.

SETH

What about him?

VIOLET

He may just be a hansom idiot.

SETH

He really is hansom.

VIOLET

At least he's never killed anyone in real life - he's got that
goon' for him.

SETH

He told you about that?

VIOLET

Who was it? Your girlfriend? Your mother? Your father.

SETH

I never killed anybody. Wayne's had such an exciting life.
I wanted him to think that I did too.

VIOLET

I thought you knew what was real. That's why I picked
you to have sex with. You're dark and burned out and
not very attractive - but at least you were real. Now
what am I supposed to do?

They sit silently as they watch Wayne attempt to urinate on the Sycamore.

EXT. SYCAMORE TREE - SAME

Wayne finishes peeing on the tree and zips his pants. Just as he's about to turn and walk away, he hears a voice.

VOICE (CLARK)

You might want to have that prostate checked. You have an intermittent flow - that's the sign of acute prostates and could be an indicator of cancer. Do you get a regular prostate exam?

Wayne curiously side-steps his way around to the other side of the tree, out of the view of Seth and Violet. Sitting on the ground, tangled up in his sweater is fifty year old Clark Felt. Lark's clothes are torn to shreds. His pea-green cardigan is knotted around his waist, pinning his left arm to his body. The soles are partially separated from his wing-tip shoes. His comb-over hangs long on the wrong side of his head and his brain seems for a moment as disheveled as his appearance. He slips a pair of thick wire-rimmed glasses from his shirt pocket, presses them up over his prominent nose-hump where they snap into place. Not realizing or perhaps not caring that both of the lenses are cracked, he looks up at Wayne. He stands at a commanding 5'2".

CLARK

My God, you're so young. You've got the plumbing of an eighty year old man. Come over here closer.

Wayne takes a step back.

CLARK

Fine - you can go holistic. But all the Saw Palmetto in China isn't going to open that dam.

WAYNE

Why do you care about my prostate?

CLARK

Do you think it's a coincidence that that tornado dropped me right here?

WAYNE

Are you all right?

CLARK

I do this all the time.

WAYNE

Do what?

CLARK

Ride. I never remember seeing this tree. Sycamore. This is Tornado Flats. It's the longest stretch of pure prairie left in America. I've ridden twisters from one end to the other.

WAYNE

You ride tornadoes?

CLARK

Yes sir.

WAYNE

Why?

CLARK

It's clean - just me and the wind - no rocks, boards, telephone poles - and most importantly - no cows. When you get up to speed and start to move across the flat - it's like you're floating in space with nothing between you and infinity. But I don't remember ever seeing this tree. Maybe I was too busy concentrating on the forest. You know when your lost in the forest it's hard to identify an individual tree. But when there's no forest - it's impossible not to see it. Do you get it?

Clark slowly stands, making sure that all his body parts are in tact. He lifts one hand with the other and painfully extends a handshake to Wayne. Clark winces as Wayne warily shakes his hand.

CLARK

You really need to get that prostate checked.

WAYNE

Pretty dangerous sport for a doctor - don't you think?

CLARK

I'm not a doctor. I'm a med student at Oklahoma State. I can give that prostate a feel - it'll take two seconds. Go Sooner.

Again, Clark lifts one hand with the other, this time offering Wayne just one finger.

WAYNE

I'm good.

Clark starts to unhook his sweater.

CLARK

This is the part I can't figure out. I've ridden with pullovers on - wind-breakers, turtle-necks, even a cortex parka - everything ends up in knots. When you're not in control - everything winds up in knots. Get it?

WAYNE

Let me give you a hand there.

While Wayne works his fingers into one of the tight knots, Clark slips his glasses off and drops them into Wayne's front pants pocket. Wayne doesn't feel it.

CLARK

Thank you. I always get tangled up cause I always have too much on. Can't wear any jewelry either. And your pockets have to be empty. No baggage. If you want a good clean ride. Get it?

Wayne takes Clark's hand and looks it over.

WAYNE

It doesn't look that bad.

Clark probes his abdomen with his good hand.

CLARK

I think I bruised my pancreas...is it on the left or the right. (Wayne squeezes his hand.) Ouch - and that hand is broken.

WAYNE

Why don't you come with us. We can get you to a hospital.

Going back to work on the knots, Clark peeks around the tree and sees the bus idling along the roadside.

CLARK

In that tub. They don't even have seat belts.

WAYNE

Did you say Tub?

CLARK

Just an expression. I'm sure it's safe. If safe is what you like. I prefer freedom.

WAYNE

Freedom.

CLARK

Yea. Like Braveheart (yelling) .. freedom!
That was a movie – wasn't it?
You start by getting that prostate checked.
Your bus is waiting.

WAYNE

Are you sure I can't get you a ride?

The horn honks again as the wind picks up.

CLARK

It was nice to meet you Mr. Mackey. My ride's almost here too.

Clark grabs hold of the tree. Wayne feels the hair on the back of his neck bristle as he looks behind him to see a twister in the distance. Now he has to shout over the wind.

WAYNE

You be careful.

CLARK

No thank you.

Wayne sprints back to the bus and climbs on board.

INT. BUS - SAME

Through the bus's window, Wayne looks back at the tree. The twister in the distance has grown much closer and much larger and although he's been deeply affected and confused by his encounter with Clark, Wayne chooses to say nothing.

TOBY

We're gonna roll folks.

The bus pulls back onto the highway and picks up speed. Wayne alone stares through the back window at the tree as the twister sweeps past and plucks it from the ground like a weed. Violet notices something different about Wayne as he snaps his gaze around to the front of the bus and shakes his head in disbelief.

VIOLET

What's with you?

WAYNE

I don't know.

VIOLET

You look like you saw a ghost.

As the bus rolls down the highway, dozens of twisters can be seen moving slowly across the flats. The sight is mystifying. Dangerous and beautiful. They meander like living tops, wobbling and pulsating across a hundred square miles, moving in every direction. Toby keeps a steady line on the road, knowing that only fate would dictate any impending deadly encounter. Everyone is silent and reflective.

TOBY

Roll some windows down back there. There's enough low pressure through here we could pop. Seen it too. Bus number thirty two from L.A. Nineteen seventy two. Windows rolled up tight as a drum - air conditioner runnin' full blast - like fillin' up a balloon. Pressure outside dropped like a rock and boom. That bus popped like a barbecued bullfrog. I was runnin' right behind or I wouldn't have believed it myself. I was empty, just takin' one over the river and was gonna pick up in Little Rock - had all my windows down - nobody on board to complain. Been rollin' 'em down ever since - through the flats anyway.

They each quickly roll down a window.

Wayne shifts in his seat and feels something sticking him in the leg. He reaches into his pants pocket and pulls out Clark's cracked glasses.

WAYNE

How many times have you been through here Toby?

TOBY

Hundred. At least.

WAYNE

You seem to know a lot about tornadoes.

TOBY

Have to.

WAYNE

Could a man survive being picked up by a tornado and carried a few miles without being killed?

TOBY

Don't worry, I won't let anything happen to you.

WAYNE

I mean if a man wanted to. If he wanted to ride a tornado.

TOBY

You want to kill yourself you wait 'til we get to Idaho. Not on my shift.

WAYNE

Not me. Just a regular man.

TOBY

Three hundred mile an hour wind. A blade of grass could kill ya. Nothin' can survive inside a tornado. That's why you don't see nothin' alive for hundreds of miles at a stretch.

WAYNE

Are you sure?

TOBY

You see any cows? No. You see any birds? No. No mice, no snakes, no people. This is tornado flats. Nothin' lives in tornado flats - at least not for long.

Wayne slips Clark's glasses on and presses them tightly to his face.

WAYNE

That's what I thought.

Wayne slides the glasses to the tip of his nose and peers down through the cracked lenses.

WAYNE

You know what a prostate is Toby?

TOBY

It's a doughnut shaped gland about the size of a walnut that surrounds the urethra. It secretes fluid necessary to form semen that allow sperm to stay alive long enough to ensure fertilization. Had to have mine cut out a couple of years ago. You know what a bilateral orchiectomy is?

WAYNE

No.

TOBY

Cause you don't want to know.

WAYNE

No, I do.

TOBY

Let's just say that my boys were forced to retire and move to Florida.

Wayne becomes anxious.

WAYNE

You don't have to tell me any more.

TOBY

They take the testicles off if they think their might be a chance for any spread or recurrence. Stops the testosterone. They said it's better than bein' dead. But I don't know. That's why me and Daisy just talk.

VIOLET

(to Wayne)

Aren't you glad you can speak.

WAYNE

What!? What did I do?

VIOLET

You don't just ask someone about their prostate.

WAYNE

I just asked if he knew what it was.

SETH

He does.

WAYNE

What business is it of anyone's if my - urine flow is intermittent.

VIOLET

It's nobody's business - and nobody asked you.

TOBY

You have an intermittent flow?

WAYNE

Yea. Why? Is that really bad?

TOBY

Have you ever had it checked?

WAYNE

I don't want to talk about this.

SETH

You said you had an intermittent flow.

WAYNE

Shut up! Look I'm under a lot of stress okay. It's not easy to do what I did. I walked away - FROM SOMETHING!

VIOLET

Your a real jerk.

WAYNE

Hey everybody on the planet knows who I am. Do you think that's easy. I can't go anywhere. It's unbelievable. I have cameras pointed at me all the time twenty four seven trying to catch me doing something human. What if they caught someone's finger up my ass. Any idea what that would be like?

VIOLET

Yes and no.

WAYNE

Well trust me - anybody would have a hard time peeing.

TOBY

I'm sure you're fine. They let me take my boys home in a jar.

Wayne starts to hyperventilate.

WAYNE

Oh my God!

TOBY

It's some consolation.

SETH

Are they black?

VIOLET

Does every thought have to be expressed?

TOBY

It's a fair question.

WAYNE

Oh my God!

TOBY

Let's just say – they're blacker now than they were.

WAYNE

Oh my God!

Wayne runs into the bathroom, slams the door as Toby suddenly hits the brakes. The bus holds a pulsing idle, stopped in the middle of the road.

TOBY

What the hell?

SETH

What is it?

TOBY

It's a chicken.

VIOLET

Don't hit it.

Seth and Violet join Toby in his curious gaze out the windshield. A small gray hen stands motionless in front of the bus.

SETH

What's it doing?

TOBY

Nothin'. It's just standin' there.

VIOLET

It's a sign.

SETH

Why did the chicken cross the road?

Wayne staggers out of the bathroom.

WAYNE

Why did we stop?

SETH

A chicken.

VIOLET

There's a chicken in the road.

WAYNE

A chicken?

Wayne goes to the window.

WAYNE

It is a chicken. What's it doing?

TOBY

Nothin'.

WAYNE

You said there's nothing out here. Are there chickens out here?

TOBY

There's one.

The chicken turns and stares directly at them.

TOBY

That's the damnedest thing I've ever seen.

WAYNE

Why is it looking at us?

TOBY

You askin' me cause I'm black?

WAYNE

What?

TOBY

Why you think I know everything about chickens?

WAYNE

You seem to know a lot about a lot of things.

The chicken walks to the passenger side of the bus and begins to peck at the door. Toby becomes more agitated.

VIOLET

I think it wants to come in.

TOBY

Well it can't come in.

SETH

Let's give it a ride.

TOBY

No chickens on this bus.

VIOLET

Let it in.

TOBY

No. No chickens.

WAYNE

I think we should let it in. It keeps pecking.

TOBY

I'm afraid of chickens. And turkeys. And geese.

SETH

It's obviously lost and it's obviously intelligent.

VIOLET

We have to let it in.

Toby reluctantly pulls the waist-high handle that allows the buses side door to swing open. The chicken thrusts its head into the bus, flicks it 180 degrees in both directions and promptly hops in.

Totally focused, the chicken walks right up to Wayne, turns around and poops on his shoe.

WAYNE

Why?

VIOLET

It is intelligent.

The chicken goes to the back of the bus, hops up onto Wayne's seat and sits patiently as if he's just waiting for the bus to get moving again.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS - LATER

Wayne and the chicken are having an intimate but one-sided conversation.

WAYNE

Who knows how many people were inspired to kill because of a Wayne Mackey movie. I can't live with that. I never thought it made a difference. I just ignored it. It was always easier to blame something else. But I knew. I knew it when I looked in the eyes of some little kid and I knew he idolized me. And why? Cause I had a gun. And I killed people. And not bad guys like in the old days, but just people. And I knew that that little kid wanted to be me. And I quit. I just hope it's not too late.

The chicken looks up at Wayne and clucks.

WAYNE

It's not too late?

The chicken falls over and dies. Wayne nudges it.

WAYNE

Hey. Hey.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

Lavender wildflowers dominate the landscape in a wide fenceless meadow on the banks of a river as Wayne, Seth and Violet form a tiny circle around a tiny grave. Toby waits in the bus. Seth wipes a tear from his eye.

SETH

These funerals are really getting to me.

WAYNE

He was a good friend.

VIOLET

He was a chicken.

SETH

He had a pure soul.

WAYNE

And he listened.

VIOLET

A chicken.

SETH

You don't really believe that do you?

VIOLET

Oh no Seth please - not now.

SETH

Why do you dismiss alternate concepts of spirituality?

VIOLET

I'm catholic.

SETH

Oh.

VIOLET

What's that supposed to mean.

SETH

It doesn't *mean* anything?

Violet's voice goes up an octave and few decibels as she begins to get defensive.

VIOLET

You never have a point. You think your on such a higher plane than everybody else.

WAYNE

This really isn't the time or place.

She begins to fume.

VIOLET

Not the time or the place. Since when do you decide what the time or the place is. You don't get to say what the time or place is!

WAYNE

It's just that - (he gestures to the grave) - the chicken.

VIOLET

You see Seth! A chicken. It was a chicken!

SETH

It had a soul.

Violet becomes enraged.

VIOLET

No it didn't! It was food.

SETH

What about the horse?

Violet gets eerily calm. She hangs her head.

WAYNE

That *can* be food.

Her head snaps up. She has a wild look in her eyes. She grabs Wayne in a headlock and begins punching him repeatedly in the face with all her strength. Wayne's face is bathed in blood as he finally manages to slither free.

WAYNE

What are you doing?

He realizes that he's bleeding and begins to freak out.

WAYNE

You made me bleed! You made me bleed!!
Real blood!

Wayne rushes her and tackles her to the ground. She reaches up and punches him as hard as she can in the nose. Wayne flies onto his back and writhes as he clutches his face.

WAYNE

You broke my nose! You broke my nose!

Violet starts to cry.

SETH

He's sorry.

WAYNE

I'm sorry? I'm sorry she broke my nose!?

SETH

You're sorry you were insensitive - about the horse.

Violet punches Seth in the gut.

VIOLET

Eat fist Buddha.

Seth doubles over.

SETH

(gasping for air)

I'm not a Buddhist - I'm agnostic.

Violet punches him in the head, sending him to the ground. She kneels next to him and rubs his shoulder.

VIOLET

I'm so sorry.

SETH

It's not about the horse - is it?

VIOLET

No.

WAYNE

Is it about the chicken?

VIOLET

It's about me. My life is so meaningless. Who am I?
What am I? Why am I? What do I want?!

SETH

You've never asked those questions before?

VIOLET

No.

SETH

Wow.

VIOLET

You know everything Seth - why don't you tell me.
You're the super guru. You tell me the answers
to all life's questions. Please - tell me.

SETH

None of those questions have answers. At least not real
answers.

VIOLET

No Seth - that's the problem - they do. They do have
answers. And they usually end up humiliating you
and beating you down 'til you're dead inside.

Wayne is holding his head back so his nose won't bleed.

WAYNE

So you got stuck in a bad pretend three day marriage
and your fake husband tried to kill you. He's dead -
move on.

VIOLET

He wasn't my fake husband.

Violet takes a deep breath.

VIOLET

He was my pimp.

Wayne and Seth look at one another.

VIOLET

I came to L.A. to be an actress. I ran out of money in about two weeks so I started hanging out in bars in Bel Air and Beverly Hills. Guys would buy me drinks and take me home and give me money. I started working for Paul - that's the guy in the Corvette - the work was more steady and it seemed safe. I was a prostitute for two years. Paul was always possessive but the last year he started getting violent. Anytime I'd mention getting my career on track he'd beat the shit out of me and rape me and force me to do porn. So I left to work on my own and became a furry.

SETH

A furry?

VIOLET

We dress up in giant animal costumes and ... that's how it goes down.

WAYNE

You were an actress?

VIOLET

Yeah. Just like you - except you became a movie star and I became a prostitute. And I was good.

WAYNE

So that's why you hated me?

VIOLET

That's the main reason.

WAYNE

Well - you gave up being a prostitute and so did I.

Violet starts to cry.

SETH

I'll bet Wayne could get you a part.

WAYNE

Sure I'll just waltz into the studio I just screwed out of millions of dollars and I'm sure they'll be thrilled to help out.

SETH

What if you went back to your movie and took her as a package deal - they wouldn't say no to that. You could get the jet with the personal chef. And a doctor for your doughnut gland. And you could maybe have it be a little less violent. They'd listen to you. She's crying.

WAYNE

You threw my cell phone out the window. I don't even know their phone numbers. Hell, I don't even know their names.

SETH

You could eat caviar and get your prostate checked.

Wayne looks at Violet. She doesn't say anything.

WAYNE

What about that whole speech about being nice to someone because you want something.

VIOLET

I've never been that nice to you.

SETH

That's true.

WAYNE

(to Violet)

Would you want me to do that?

VIOLET

(Yelling with joy)

No! No! No!

CUT TO:

INT. BUS - DAY

The bus rolls on. Violet is exhilarated. She seems transformed. She digs through her purse and comes up with a small pair of scissors with which she promptly starts to cut large chunks out of her hair.

VIOLET

What a rush. It wasn't being a prostitute that was killing me. It was wanting to be an actress. God what a burden. Now it's lifted. You saved me Wayne. You gave up what I wanted. You threw away my dream. And I can see that we're the same. I see myself in you. And I hate me. But at least I know who I am. Thank you.

WAYNE

I'm sorry. Please stop cutting your hair.

She starts to take out bigger and bigger chunks.

VIOLET

Are you kidding? I'm finally free. I feel like my heart's gonna explode. I don't care!

Hair begins to fly around the bus, lifted by the breeze through the windows.

WAYNE

(picking hair from his lip)

It's not a horrible dream - please stop cutting. I could get you a great part. Just stop cutting. She's not stopping.

Her hair is butchered. Huge parts of her scalp are showing.

VIOLET

Lemme have a razor.

WAYNE

Do you want to direct - You could direct.

VIOLET

Seth - razor.

Seth goes through his bag and hands Violet an electric razor. She flips it on and begins to shave her head to the skin.

WAYNE

Please don't.

VIOLET

We're free Wayne. You and me - we're both free.
Neither one of us have to be rich and famous!

Toby yells back to them as the buss passes a sign reading, FRANKLIN IDAHO – GOT POTATOES?

TOBY

Franklin Idaho!

Along the side of the road, they begin to see townspeople walking in the opposite direction, away from the town. First a few, then more and more.

VIOLET

What's happening?

Smoke billows in the distance.

TOBY

Something's not right. Oh my.

The bus rolls into Franklin.

The entire town is leveled to the ground, not a building standing. Smoldering rubble burns all around. People mill about, stunned, scrounging through the debris.

The bus stops in the middle of the destruction.

They get out of the bus and are shocked by what they see.

Toby approaches one of the townspeople.

TOBY

What happened here?

MAN

(in shock)

Rotten Potatoes.

TOBY

What?

MAN

Hundred and sixteen silos were full. Then the heat. Then.

WAYNE

What?

MAN

Then they went rotten. The silos just blew up.
Like big smelly potatoey bombs. Every one of 'em.
Boom. There's nothin' left. There's nothin' left.

SETH

Rotten potatoes. Huh.

Toby wanders around the ashes on one of the burned out houses and is startled by a familiar voice from behind a blackened chimney. It's Clark Feltz. He leans against the chimney and speaks directly and matter-of-factly to Toby.

CLARK

Toby, Toby, Toby. You sold your soul for
fifty thousand dollars. I thought you knew better.
What would possess a man – a few weeks from
promotion to move a project forward without
consent? I was sending another bus!

TOBY

It wasn't about the money... or the bus.

CLARK

I know what it was about. It was about you.

TOBY

I just wanted to get those young people to where
they wanted to go. That's all. That's my job.

CLARK

That's *my* job old man.

A small twister starts to brew in a burned out lot next door.

CLARK

My ride is here.

TOBY

What do I do now?

CLARK

You figure it out.

Clark steps back behind the chimney as the twister sweeps past Toby and disappears into the distance.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUS BATHROOM - DAY

Wayne is standing over the toilet in the bus's bathroom. He looks disgraced as he unzips his pants and begins to pee. To his amazement he's peeing like a horse. He hears Seth from outside the door.

SETH

Hey - keep it down in there.

VIOLET

He's peeing.

SETH

I can hear.

VIOLET

No - he's *really* peeing.

Violet excitedly gets up and goes to the bathroom door.

VIOLET

(yelling through the door to Wayne)
Your peeing!

Wayne comes triumphantly out of the bathroom. Violet throws her arms around him.

SETH

(seeking some attention)
I pooped this morning.

VIOLET

He peed - uninterrupted.

WAYNE

God that felt good.

The bus comes to an abrupt stop.

TOBY

I think you all better come up here.

A SMALL GREY CHICKEN stands in the middle of the road. Wayne, Seth and Violet press against the window.

SETH

I told you it wasn't just a chicken.

VIOLET

That's not the same chicken - idiot.

TOBY

It looks like the same chicken.

WAYNE

Well it obviously can't be the same chicken. That chicken's dead. We buried it.

Toby stops the bus. As if from memory, the chicken hops up to the door of the bus and climbs aboard. It hops up on the seat next to Seth and stares straight ahead. There's a long bewildered silence on the bus.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICKEN GRAVE SITE - DAY

They're all gathered around the spot where the chicken was buried. Wayne is digging.

VIOLET

I can't believe we're digging up a dead chicken.

SETH

I wouldn't be so sure.

WAYNE

I'm not finding anything.

The other gray chicken looks on from the top of the bus.

VIOLET

Dig.

WAYNE

It's not here.

VIOLET

It's gotta be there.

SETH

You're not gonna find any chicken.

VIOLET

Some animal must have dug it up or something.

WAYNE

Hey - your hair.

Violet feels her hair. The parts that she had cut just hours before have now grown in. Wayne pulls Clark's glasses from his pocket to get a closer look at Violet's hair. He slips the glasses on and feels her head. He's amazed.

VIOLET

Weren't those glasses cracked?

Wayne takes glasses off and inspects them. The lenses are smooth and polished like new with no sign of a crack or even a scratch. He puts them back on and gazes out across the highway into the desolate vastness of the prairie - there's nothing for miles. He takes the glasses off and hands them to Violet who puts them on for a moment. She looks out toward the highway. In the distance, a twister drops suddenly from the sky, lifting whatever loose dirt and grass from the earth and pulling it into its spawning cloud. Violet pulls Clark's glasses from her utterly confused face and tries to spot the twister again only to find it gone.

She sees something moving out in the distance. She quickly snaps the glasses back on and is stunned at what she sees. The fat woman riding the horse that was hit by the bus. She's galloping effortlessly across the wide open prairie. Violet presses her head forward in disbelief. She slips the glasses off and tries to hand them back to Wayne.

WAYNE

Keep 'em. I have a feeling I'm not gonna need 'em anymore.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUS - DUSK

As the bus rolls West, Wayne and Violet sit toward the back, Toby is driving, Seth and the chicken are sitting somewhere in between.

TOBY

(under his breath but audible)

That chicken spooks me. I've never turned a bus around in my life. I've transported my share of experiences but I've never turned one around before - I don't even know if it's possible.

WAYNE

What did you say?

TOBY

Never mind.

WAYNE

I thought you said something.

The chicken clucks loudly and flaps it's wings.

TOBY

I might have. I don't know boy – I'm spooked.

SETH

(to Toby)

So what happens now? We've never done this.

Seth and Toby seem to share some common knowledge.

TOBY

I don't know. I told you.

SETH

Well this is just great.

Wayne becomes suspicious.

WAYNE

What's going on?

EXT. BUS - SAME

The bus enters the same tunnel they had gone through before but this time headed in the other direction. The bus comes out the other side of the tunnel and into A THUNDEROUS HAILSTORM.

INT. BUS - SAME

TOBY

I don't think it wants us back.

VIOLET

What doesn't want us back?

SETH

What we left behind..

WAYNE

Well I don't think *it* has a choice.

Seth and Toby share a look of bewilderment and anxiety as bolts of lightning strike the ground near the bus..

WAYNE

Oh crap..... it has a choice.

Seth gets up and goes to sit up front with Toby. A BOLT OF LIGHTNING hits the road just in front of the bus causing Toby to veer sideways and struggle to regain control again.

TOBY

This is why I never backtrack.

Hail starts pounding the bus so hard that Toby has to pull to the side of the road. As soon as the bus stops, the hail abruptly ceases.

As the sky clears Toby sees someone running across the highway toward the bus. A very wet and disoriented man approaches the door to the bus, his coat pulled tightly over his head. Toby opens the door to let him in. He pulls his head out from under his coat - it's Clark. Clark disguises his words, so as not to make the passengers suspicious and to play with Toby's mind a bit.

CLARK

Can you give me a lift into town. My car got flooded out and I've got finals tomorrow.

TOBY

Finals? Is that what they call it nowadays?

CLARK

Yes sir. University of Oklahoma. Go Sooners.

Toby gives him a knowing look. A dirty look.

TOBY

It's all the same to me. Take a seat. I'll try to get us goin'... back. Never gone back in my life.

CLARK

Thanks. You're doin' a great job by the way.

TOBY

Just take a seat.

Clark leans in to Toby and becomes deadly serious.

CLARK

Don't mess with me old man. You just hang on for a little while longer and you move up. If it were up to me I'd leave you behind that wheel forever - lucky for you I don't make the rules. I wasted a perfectly good horse.

TOBY

I don't like you. I never liked you.

CLARK

Nobody does. Then everybody does. Then nobody does. No sympathy for the devil. It doesn't matter to me. It's my job to make sure people get what they want.

TOBY

No matter what?

CLARK

No matter what. We have a job to do. Now do it.

Clark walks to the back of the bus. He can't take his eyes off of Violet. He sits down next to her. Wayne hasn't recognized him yet.

VIOLET

Do I know you?

CLARK

No - but I sure feel like I know you. I'm a huge fan.

Violet thinks it's a pick-up line.

VIOLET

That's a new one.

CLARK

I'm sure you get that all the time. It's just that when people see you in a movie I guess they think they know you. Sorry - I'm Clark Feltz. I'm studying to be a doctor. A specialist actually.

VIOLET

I've never been in a movie. Not with my clothes on.

CLARK

You're Violet Bains aren't you?

VIOLET

How do you know my name?

CLARK

Everybody knows your name. You're famous.
Would you sign this for me?

He rifles through his wallet and pulls out what he thinks is a small piece of paper.

VIOLET

That's your drivers license.

CLARK

I lost my glasses in the storm. What's this?

He pulls out his Social Security card and hands it to Violet.

VIOLET

You're funny. Or crazy. But you're pathetic and
a little homely - just my type.

She pulls the glasses from her purse.

VIOLET

(continued)

Try these.

Clark slips the glasses over the hump in his nose and they snap into place like a puzzle piece.

CLARK

Wow. These are perfect. Who'd believe that
I have the same astigmatism as Violet Bains.

VIOLET

Will you stop saying my name - and you have
Wayne Mackey's astigmatism.

Clark laughs. Without totally standing up, Clark swings his body back to the seat next to Wayne. He looks Wayne in the eye. Wayne recognizes him but before he can say anything Clark puts his finger to Wayne's lips. He gives Wayne a knowing wink. Clark's tone is introspective and omniscient.

CLARK

I needed my glasses back. I have finals tomorrow. I'm really near-sighted - sometimes I can't see two feet in front of me. You know what I mean?

WAYNE

Not really.

CLARK

I mean that if I had it all – I might be a little more appreciative. But that's just me. You ever see a Thalidomide baby. A baby with no limbs. Now that's a problem. By the way, how's your pee-pee? Better I'm guessing?

Wayne is taken aback and intimidated by Clark's presence.

WAYNE

Fine. Better. How goes the – tornado riding?

CLARK

Life's a funny thing Wayne. Everybody has their ups and downs - you know. Everybody's confused and insecure, filled with self-doubt and self-loathing. We all share one thing - we're all gonna die. Do you know what I'm getting at?

WAYNE

No not at all.

CLARK

Everybody meets the same end - we just want to get there with a little dignity - with a little class. People just don't seem to ever appreciate the things that they have - blessings Wayne – blessings. That's what keeps me in business.

WAYNE

What business?

CLARK

What a person needs is more important than what a person wants but sometimes they don't know what they need 'til they get what they want or 'til they loose what they have. It's a little complicated, but that's why life is so long – it takes a while to figure out.
I'm just here to make sure that people learn that important and sometimes painful lesson.
No matter what.

Clark looks out the window. The sun has broken through and the sky is doubly bright, shining off of the wet ground. There's a full rainbow on the horizon that colors Clark's glasses.

CLARK

Looks like the weather's clearing up. I gotta go.

Clark pushes himself to his feet and leans into Violet.

CLARK

It was a great pleasure to meet you. I hope you keep making making movies, you're such a great talent.

VIOLET

And you tell everyone in *Crazy Town* that I said hello.

Clark takes quiet offense to her attitude. He gets in close to her face. He addresses her with controlled anger.

CLARK

See - your friend back there was dying inside. Pissing his life away - literally. Now he's all better. And you have what you always wanted. So good luck with that. Just remember - things aren't always what they're cracked up to be. I'm sure I'll see you soon

Clark laughs to himself as he takes the glasses off and hands them to Violet. She looks down an the lenses, *now cracked again*.

When she looks up from the glasses, Clark is standing outside the bus as it pulls away. *Clark has the chicken under his arm*. The chicken flaps it's wings wildly, trying to break free of Clark's grasp. He gives a condescending wave as the bus rolls slowly past him...

THE SOUND OF THE BUS ROLLING AWAY DISSOLVES INTO THE SOUND OF BUSSES COMING AND GOING IN FRONT OF A BUS STATION.....

LONG SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUS STATION - MIDNIGHT

Violet Bains sits quietly behind black sunglasses waiting for her bus. Her sleeves roll down past her wrists to the base of her thumbs and her frayed bell-bottoms drag well below her boot heels. The wide brim of a beat-up cowboy hat shades all but just a hint of her perfect chin. She believes that she's mastered a consummate disguise but ironically her determination to be anonymous makes her the target of every eye. She stares straight ahead, pretending not to be noticed.

She lights a short filterless cigarette with the tiny butt of one burned down to nothing, flicking what's left to the ground in a silent shower of sparks. She tries to ignore the pain, secretly rubbing her singed fingers together.

From a distant corner of the terminal, Violet spots a man approaching; a very effeminate man drawn toward her like a giddy bride waving a pen and an old bus ticket stub like a bouquet. Violet pretends to remain unaware until that awkward moment of unwanted contact. He stands before her as if to offer his virtue. Violet snatches the pen and the old bus ticket stub from his hand and hides them under her coat. She pulls him down by his coat onto the bench beside her. She speaks to him softly, making sure no one else hears.

VIOLET

How did you know who I was?

MAN

You wore that hat in Whiskey Train. And those were the glasses from Risk Factor. You were so funny in that movie.

VIOLET

It wasn't a comedy.

MAN

I'd be honored to have your autograph. Could you make it to 'my true love, Stephen, love Violet Bains.'

She takes out the pen, signs his ticket stub and hands it back to him, making sure that no one sees her do it.

VIOLET

I'd really rather not have anybody know I'm here.

MAN

Maybe you should stop wearing clothes from your movies. Listen to me - telling Violet Bains what to do.

VIOLET

No you have a good point. Too recognizable. I always tried to tell them my clothes were too recognizable but they wouldn't listen. That's the problem Stephen. Nobody listens.

Hearing Violet speak his name gets him very excited and nervous...and strangely possessive.

MAN

Who are you waiting for? Are you waiting for someone?

Violet counters his energy by becoming dead calm.

VIOLET

No. I'm on the next bus. I've quit making movies and I'm leaving L.A.- tonight.

MAN

Like in Runaway when you left Boston for Mel Gibson. You were so strong.

VIOLET

But this isn't a movie.

MAN

If it were I'd be in a Violet Bains movie. I'd just die.

VIOLET

I really don't want anyone to know I'm here so if you could just.....

The man takes his prize and prances off across the terminal to a far corner where his friend waits for him. The man whispers to his friend and they both gaze dreamily in Violet's direction. She pulls the brim of her hat down over her eyes, gets up and ambles over to the ticket window. TOBY IS BEHIND THE GLASS. Violet dejectedly pushes her ticket across the counter. *She never looks up at Toby*

VIOLET

I'd like to trade this ticket in.

TOBY

Is there a problem?

VIOLET

I just need to get on a different bus.

TOBY

There's no other bus to where you're going?

VIOLET

I don't care, just get me another ticket.

TOBY

Where to?

VIOLET

Surprise me.

TOBY

The next bus out ends up in Franklin Idaho on ... next Thursday. Number sixty-nine. Weather won't let us take you through straight north, so you'll have to travel sixty six to Oklahoma and then up and around.

VIOLET

How many people live in Franklin Idaho?

TOBY

Not as many as in Vegas.

VIOLET

Sixty nine then.

CUT TO:

INT. BIKER BAR – DAY

Clark stands in front of the huge portrait of Mick Jagger. He lifts his glass as if to toast. He talks to the portrait.

CLARK

You can't always get what you want. But if you try sometime you just might find you get what you need. Ooo yea.

He pounds down a flaming shot of Wild Turkey.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - FUNERAL – ON MOVIE SET - SAME

CLOSE ON WAYNE'S FACE as he lays still in the open eternal-flame coffin. A elegy is being given. Wayne's face twitches slightly. A voice booms out from the back of the church - it's a movie director.

DIRECTOR

Cut! Can someone get that extra to stop twitching. He's supposed to be dead.

An ASSISTANT DIRECTOR approaches the coffin.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Look - if you keep twitching you're gonna have to go home and you won't get your thirty-five bucks. So just lay there dead and don't twitch.

WAYNE

Gotcha.

DIRECTOR

And - action.

The elegy starts again. Wayne's face twitches.

DIRECTOR

That's it. Close the lid.

WAYNE

What?

DIRECTOR

It's now a closed-casket funeral.

The assistant director goes over and closes the lid of the coffin.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS STATION – SAME

TOBY

I know what you're going through. It's like a box. It's like a box that gets smaller and smaller. Everybody's watching and everybody wants something. I know. You need to get out of the box.

VIOLET

Can I just have my ticket?

TOBY

That's another thirty six dollars.

VIOLET

Hey I didn't mean to be a bitch.
It's just that - you don't know me.

TOBY

But I was listening.

VIOLET

I'm sorry.

TOBY

You said nobody listens. Am I nobody?

VIOLET

I'm just not used to dealing with regular people.
(she pulls down her sunglasses)
I'm sort of a movie star.

CUT BACK TO:

FUNERAL SCENE - SAME

CLOSE ON WAYNE, still in the coffin. He hears a bell ring.

DIRECTOR

That's lunch. Back in one hour.

Wayne can hear people shuffling and scurrying about for a few moments until finally it's silent.
Wayne's muffled voice from inside the closed coffin. The stage is empty.

WAYNE

Hello. I'm still alive. Hello. I better get my
thirty five bucks.

Two men walk onto the set and approach the coffin. **The two men are Jesse and Clark.**

JESSE

This is a great job.

CLARK

We thought you'd be perfect for it. You're moving up.

JESSE

I knew something would come my way.

One at each end, they pick up the coffin and carry it out. They ignore Wayne's muffled cries from inside.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEARST - DAY

Jesse and Clark are loading the coffin into the back of the Hearst.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS - DAY

The buzzing of the wheels is amplified by the absence of warm bodies and the flickering light adds unnecessary drama to **Violet and Toby** sitting side by side, knees touching, talking with the intensity of a real conversation. We see that Seth is now the Bus Driver.

TOBY

It's like rub-adub-dub.

VIOLET

Explain.

TOBY

Rub-a-dub-dub three men in a tub and how do you think they got there? The butcher the baker the candlestick maker, they all jumped out of a rotten potato. 'Twas enough to make a man stare.

VIOLET

Is that really how that goes?

TOBY

That's really how it goes.

VIOLET

That's intense.

TOBY

And we're them.

VIOLET

Who?

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The Hearst is stalled in the middle of a desolate highway. Jesse and Clark stand with the hood open looking in at the motor.

JESSE

What wrong with it?

CLARK

Don't you know?

JESSE

Maybe the carburetor?

CLARK

You don't know anything about cars - do you?

JESSE

I know this one's not moving.

CLARK

This is why I travel by air.

JESSE

There's a town about a mile up the road. I used to work there. They have a good mechanic. And good sushi. You like sushi?

Jesse and Clark leave the Hearst and disappear on foot, around a bend in the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME

The bus is moving quickly along the highway being paralleled by a yellow Corvette.

CUT TO:

INT. HEARST - SAME

Wayne is pounding on the inside of the casket.

WAYNE

Hey! Is anybody there? It's getting hard to breathe in here. I better get my thirty five bucks!

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME

The yellow Corvette is headed straight for the Hearst as it comes around a corner. The Corvette slams into the Hearst and disintegrates on impact. The coffin is ejected from the back of the Hearst and tumbles end over end into a deep ravine.

EXT. CANYON BOTTOM - SAME

The coffin eventually comes to a rest at the bottom of the canyon. Wayne moans.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

The bus is parked beside the Hearst whose front end crushed by the impact of the accident and the back doors flung wide open. Violet and Seth are inspecting inside the back when they suddenly see Wayne as he climbs the last few steps out of the canyon. He's beaten up badly - clutching his ribs and limping. Wayne spots Violet and Seth and yells out.

WAYNE

Hey! (grabbing his ribs) Ouch.

VIOLET

Are you okay?

WAYNE

(groaning)

You're Violet Bains.

Wayne limps over and shakes her hand.

WAYNE

You're a very.....you're an actress. Nice to meet you.

SETH

You need some help there son?

WAYNE

No. I think I'll be all right.

SETH

You all help him up. We gotta get on the road -
we got some bad weather comin' up behind us.
You know what that means.

WAYNE

Where you guys headed?

TOBY

Idaho.

WAYNE

Maybe I'll tag along? I could use some rest.

Wayne gets on the bus and gazes out the window. The bus starts its engine which runs rough and sounds like four Harley Davidsons. The bus rolls slowly forward toward a rural crossroads and backfires as the engine returns to its normal sound. The bus slows at the crossroads as the sound of a bicycle bell rings. The bus stops as four bicycles cross in front of it.

Four Mormon missionaries on ten-speeds slow in the intersection. Wayne sees them wave at him as they cross and he hears the bicycle bell ring again. He smiles.

PANNING OUT from above, the bus rolls through the crossroads.

We hear Wayne.

WAYNE

What's in Idaho?

TOBY

Potatoes mostly. But you never know.

CREDITS START TO ROLL...

About a mile behind the bus, four Harley Davidsons rush down the highway, the riders all wearing purple scarves that wave wildly as they speed by.

After a moment, a small gray chicken crosses the road.

END

