# NOPE

Written by

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OVER BLACK:

Fade up on he ambient energy of a live studio audience. A taping in progress.

TOM (O.S.)
--I've gone and set it to the Aurora Borealis, Gordy, and... you have no idea how to tell time...

The audience laughs.

LIL JUPE (O.S.)
Great gift, dad. Way to think things through.

PHYLLIS (O.S.)
Somehow you'd think a man who can send a rocket into space would be able to manage a halfway decent birthday present...Nope.

A laugh.

LIL JUPE (O.S.)
You know Gordy? All things considered. Maybe my gift isn't that bad after all.

Another laugh, with an "awwwww."

MARY JO ELLIOT (O.S.)
HEY, GORDY! SURPRISE!!!

PHYLLIS (O.S.)
Wow! Now there's a gift!

A big laugh.

MARY JO ELLIOT (O.S.)
Here you go, Gordy! Happy birthday!

GORDY (O.S.)
Hoo hoo hoo!

The audience claps. A dull thudding begins.

A Balloon POPS. An uneasy animalistic grunt begins.

TOM
Gordy, Gordy, NO! DOWN!

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A CRASH. The crowd GASPS as the unthinkable ensues. A panic begins.

QUOTE FADES IN:

“I will cast abominable filth at you, make you vile, and make you a spectacle.” - NAHUM 3:6

INT. GORDY'S HOME! SET. DAY

Moments later...

Under the “dining room table” in the back of the sitcom set.

The audience is gone now.

The aftermath of violence is everywhere. The lamp is broken, toppled sofa cushions and a green birthday present box on the floor. Bright colored balloons hover at different elevations.

You can almost miss Mary Jo, the quintessential Teen Beat actress laying in a heap. Mary Jo’s legs are visible, while the rest of her lays obstructed from view by the blood-splattered cream colored couch.

Despite the chaotic scene, the object of our focus is a lone denim shoe which has apparently come off Mary Jo’s foot in the attack and has landed perfectly upright on its heel. One drop of blood on the shoe almost makes it seem as if it’s winking.

Just then, Gordy, a chimpanzee wearing a birthday hat and child’s clothes covered in blood stalks in cautiously, lost in a dissonant haze. He sits near the sofa confused. He regards Mary Jo’s body laying in a heap. He nudges it. Nothing. The birthday hat begins to irk Gordy. He shakes his head and HUFFS before pulling it off.

Gordy stops and looks under the table at us. He sees us.

BLACK.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. PRE-DAWN

SKY.

WIND. Thick clouds roll by.

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EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HAY BARN. PRE-DAWN

OJ opens the large heavy door. Half a dozen bales are stacked in a room that could hold more. Radio plays.

WEATHER REPORTER
Good morning on what is sure to be a windy one. We have a high wind warning for the L.A. County coast and valleys with some clouds sure to come in around 10:00 a.m. and even though the high gust warning will expire mid to late morning, you'll still want to keep an eye out.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. STABLES. PRE-DAWN

Radio continues...

NEWS REPORTER
The search for a group of missing hikers is set to resume this morning just outside of Agua Dulce. The tour group went out two days ago on the Pacific Crest trail, but didn't come back as expected that night. Crews started searching yesterday morning.

OJ walks past the stalls. The name plates, in sequence read: "Ghost, Firefly, Beethoven, Commodore, Virgil, Clover..."

OJ goes down the line feeding them.

The sprinklers turn on. Horses bound around in the arena.

TRAFFIC REPORTER
And traffic is already backed up due to an accident on the southbound 101. It is 7.44 with Beau and Ives.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. OUTDOOR ARENA. DAY

OJ turns on the hot walker, an exercise contraption, that gently leads four horses in a circle.

OTIS SR. trains GHOST, a white horse in the "Outdoor Arena," a fenced circular pitch of dirt west of the house.

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OTIS SR.
Bang.

Ghost falls dead.

OTIS SR. (CONT'D)
Up.

Ghost gets up a little off mark.

OTIS SR. (CONT'D)
Whoa. Bang.

Ghost falls.

OTIS SR. (CONT'D)
(To OJ)
Gotta get our heads up out the clouds for this one.

OJ
I know.

He steps up to the fence of the arena and watches his dad.

Otis Sr. gets on Ghost.

OTIS SR.
We land this like ‘Six Guns,’ I mean we really put on a show, you know they gotta bring us back for the sequel.

OJ smiles despite himself. Otis Sr. chuckles too.

OJ
Mmhmm.

OTIS SR.
We sure as hell ain’t gotta sell no more horses. So just execute and we ain’t got no more problems... You good?

OJ
*You* good?

OTIS SR.
Where’s your sister? What’s that about. She’s supposed to be here.

OJ
Yeah, yeah.

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Otis Sr. smirks. OJ walks back towards the house. He pulls out his phone but oddly has no charge. He flips it open a couple times.

A WIND KICKS UP. The hot walker slows to a stop.

OTIS SR.
Thought I told you to fix the damn walker.

A FAINT SCREAM.

WTF? OJ and Otis Sr. look up.

OTIS SR. (CONT'D)
You hear that?

Nothing. Just a large cloud floating overhead towards the West... OJ continues towards his ATV. Otis Sr. keeps lookin' up. By the look on his face, you can tell something's not right with the sky... THIP.

A hard rain drop --THIP-- hits the grass near OJ. Another.

THIP... THIP... big for rain. THIP! Big for hail. THIP...! THIP! THIP! DING!!!

OJ looks up as hundreds of silver and copper particles flutter down from the sky; A DRIZZLE OF THIPS, a FEW HARD DINGS. And ONE THICK "THUP."

The "THUP" hits different.

OJ turns back to his dad who sits still, mounted on Ghost, facing the valley, but slumped a little.

As the event subsides, OJ moves towards him.

A late THUP prods Ghost who carries Otis Sr. out into the field. It becomes clear quickly there is something very wrong in Otis Sr.'s resign.

OJ
Hey, hey, Pops! HEY, POPS!!!!

After a few moments, he slumps over off Ghost to the ground.

OJ drops his toolbox and runs.

INT. OJ'S HORSE TRAILER. DAY

OJ drives with focus. Otis Sr. is in the passenger seat slumped against the window with blood streaming down it.

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OJ
C’mon c’mon, what else?

OTIS SR.
Ghost, Beethoven, Commodore,
Virgil, Clover...

OJ
You good. You good. You good.... --
Pops? Pops? POPS!!

INT. HOSPITAL. ICU. DAY

OJ sits sweaty and sprinkled red.

Otis Sr. lays motionless. His face is peaceful except for his right eye which has suffered a violent trauma.

INT. HOSPITAL. EMERGENCY ROOM. DAY

The x-ray of Otis Sr.’s skull reveals a perfect white circle almost exactly in the center of his brain.

I/E. OJ’S HORSE TRAILER. SANTA CLARITA ROAD. AFTERNOON.

OJ looks at the plastic baggy containing a nickel on the passenger seat. Profuse blood splatter on the passenger’s side window.

OJ arrives back home. The ranch is as they left it except the four horses which stand in the hot walker.

OJ idles in his horse trailer short of the entrance to Haywood Ranch, staring ahead through the windshield.

Ghost obstructs the road.

OJ watches as the large white horse’s tail flicks compulsively at his backside. A thin line of blood glistens up the beast’s white haunch. At the top, the source of the agitation: a copper house key complete with a little hoop from a keychain lodged in the side of the horse’s rear end.

TITLE CARD: NOPE

THE MUYBRIDGE CLIP: A CRUDE BLACK AND WHITE FILM OF A BLACK MAN ON A GALLOPING BLACK HORSE. IT’S TWO SECONDS OF ACTION REPEATED PERPETUALLY ON A LOOP.

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INT. STUDIO STAGE. COMMERCIAL SET. DAY

OJ holds Lucky, who’s covered with dozens of pink tape tracking markers. There’s sand on the ground and a surfboard; a stunt harness and wire rig set up. "La Vie C'est Chouette" by Jodie Foster plays in the background.

The set is A BUZZ WITH HUSHED BOREDOM. Many wait in their phones. OJ zones in on some HUSHED GOSSIP from the crew. BUSTER (Caucasian, 45) the 1st AD has allergies.

BUSTER
OJ!
(To Lucky)
Oh. Hi horsie.

OJ
Don’t look at him in the eyes.
Please.

BUSTER
Okay. Ready for the safety meeting?

OJ starts texting.

OJ
Um... if it’s okay, I need like 5--
My team’s almost here.

BUSTER
--Your team’s not here. Okay
hold...
(into his headset)
...Sorry, I got the horse guy
talking to me too. What’s up..?

OJ watches from a distance as star BONNIE CLAYTON (Caucasian, 70’s) saunters onto set. She wears her iconic 1960’s hair and makeup look. A sultry surf icon. Gidget meets Marilyn. She wears a dive coat over a presumably scantily clad iconic beach look. Buster hustles over to her.

BUSTER (CONT'D)
Copy. Ladies and gentlemen. Ms.
Bonnie Clayton on set.

Fynn leads the crew in obligatory applause.

FYNN
Here she is everybody! Take a look
at all of *that!*

Bonnie takes a bow.

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BUSTER
Fynn. This is OJ, our horse trainer. You remember these guys from “Flash Point”...?

FYNN
Yeah. Hi.

BONNIE
Your name is OJ?

OJ
Otis Jr.

BONNIE
Huh.

FYNN
(to Buster)
Where’s the other guy? Where’s “Sr.”--?

BUSTER
(to Fynn)
He died. About six months ago. A bunch of random shit fell out of a plane. So I guess we’re stuck with Junior over here.

FYNN
No--Okay. Fuck. How we lookin’, Ant?

ANTLERS HOLST (Caucasian, 60s), the enshrouded cinematographer sits in the shadows behind his camera. He peers through the viewfinder.

HOLST
Good if we’re selling a horse’s ass.

The horse is facing the wrong way: Ass to camera.

FYNN
(To Bonnie)
That’s Antlers Holst, legendary cinematographer.

BUSTER
(to OJ)
--Let’s go ahead and spin the horse.

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OJ
--You had said “hold,” so--

BUSTER
--Now I’m saying “spin.” Let’s go.

OJ brings Lucky obediently in a 180. The entire crew watches. OJ ends up front and center facing the camera, uncomfortable. Antlers peers at him.

FYNN
Great and while that’s spinning, can we get makeup?

BUSTER
Makeup for Miss Bonnie Clayton, please!

2ND AD (O.C.)
Touch up!!!

The makeup artist and hair stylist shuffle onto the set with their bags.

OJ
Stay away from the back, please!?

MAKEUP ARTIST
They told me to come here?

OJ
But I need everyone to stay away from the back!!! Come on...

The crew is hushed and awkward now.

BUSTER
You know what? Good call OJ. Actually, gonna do a quick safety meeting. Guys, this is OJ, our horse trainer...? Take it away.

OJ CLEARS HIS THROAT. All eyes on him.

OJ
My name is OJ and my sister is gonna be here in a minute, I think.

GRIZZ
--Louder, please, we can’t hear you in the back!

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OJ
I said, we're your animal wranglers, with Haywood Hollywood Horses... Did you know that the very first...

As the crew's attention wanders from OJ, Em bursts into the sound stage.

EMERALD (O.C.)
Ayo....! Excuse me..! Coming through. Yo! Thank you. Sorry!

She arrives on the green screen set with a green sweater.

OJ
--Safety meeting.--

EMERALD
--Yeah. Hello! Sorry for the tardiness. My name is Emerald. That's OJ, and we are your animal wranglers today with Haywood Hollywood Horses.
(clears throat)
Now did you know that the very first assembly of photographs in sequential order to create a motion picture was a two second clip of a Black man on a horse...? Yes it was, yes it was! Now some of y'all know Eadweard Muybridge, the grandfather of motion pictures who took the pictures that made that clip... but does anybody know the name of that Black jockey that rode the horse...?

HOLST
No.

EMERALD
Nope. The first ever stunt man, animal wrangler and movie star rolled up in one and there's almost no record of em... That man was a Bahamian jockey that went by the name of Alistair E. Haywood. My great great-grandfather...

OJ
Great.

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EMERALD
There's another "great" grandfather but that's why, up over at Haywood Ranch, as the only Black-owned horse trainers in Hollywood, we like to say "since the moment pictures could move, we've had skin in the game."

She gets a LIL LAUGH...

EMERALD (CONT'D)
--Let's discuss some of the safety precautions while we're on set. Shall we?
("micro machines" fast)
One: Please refrain from loud noises, sudden movements and keep your cellphone ringers off, that'd be appreciated. Two: If you see something that looks unsafe for anyone, please alert myself, OJ, or your next in chain of command. And three... let's have a great shoot! Oh and I'm Emerald Haywood! I also act, write, direct, internet, fashion, VFX, motorcycles, baby... And I make a mean grilled cheese if you're looking for Crafty! I'll be over there...

A very small SMATTERING OF APPLAUSE. Em is still proud and begins mingling with the crew; chatting up a costumer.

FYNN
Okay. That was great, that was a lot. Let's do a rehearsal.

BUSTER
We should! Rehearsing!

2ND AD (O.C.)
....Rehearsing!!

OJ
We might wanna give him a break--

BUSTER
--We'll rehearse one first, and then break, yeah?

BONNIE
Well I'm ready to do one.

FYNN
OJ, she's ready to do one. Tell the horse we're ready to do one.

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BUSTER
Yeah, scratch rehearsal. Action's up.

2ND AD (O.C.)
Scratching rehearsal; action's up.

OJ
Em... Em...

BONNIE
What's the horse's name?!

OJ
Lucky.

BONNIE
Is he?

BUSTER
VFX, let's do the ball now while we have a sec.

FYNN
(To OJ)
Thanks, OJ. You can step out.

BUSTER
VFX - hurry up!

A sleepy VFX dude comes in with a VFX reference ball. He holds it up and turns it. Lucky catches his reflection in the silver side.

OJ
Hey. Hey!

BAM!!!! LUCKY KICKS THE MAKEUP BAG which explodes with powder! The crew goes silent.

INT. CREW PORT-A-POTTY. DAY

OJ gathers himself. He's calm for a second but then almost punches the wall.

INT/EXT. STUDIO STAGE. COMMERCIAL SET. DAY

GRIZZ (British line producer, late 50's, sunglasses tan line) confers with OJ.

GRIZZ
I know, Look. It's... maybe it's too soon, huh? Not the gig? Not ready yet?

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OJ
(discreet)
We need it.

GRIZZ
Your father left a big hole.I know.
There'll be others... Sorry.
(Em runs by)
Tell her I'm sorry.

OJ
...Thank you for the opportunity.

GRIZZ
Of course.

Members of the production mill about as a green VFX stand-in horse rolls onto the set.

INT. OJ'S HORSE TRAILER. STUDIO. DAY

OJ drives quietly steaming. Em puffs her vape pen in the passenger's seat. It's awkward. Eventually.

OJ
Where am I dropping you?

EMERALD
I'm goin' up with you.

OJ bites his tongue.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
I need to get some shit. The girl I'm talking to said I could crash at her place while she's out of town, so I'll prolly leave in the morning.

OJ
So I gotta drive you back tomorrow?

EMERALD
I can find a ride but can I get "fun OJ" out this bitch? Or am I gonna get stuck with fuckin' "wack OJ?"...you're really making me feel like I'm not loved. Is that how you want your little sister to feel?

He stays wack.

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EXT. SANTA CLARITA. ROAD. DAY

They drive through the dry empty expansive SoCal countryside.

INT. OJ'S HORSE TRAILER. SANTA CLARITA. ROAD. DAY

Em watches nostalgically amused as they drive past a lonely auto-dealership lined by a row of sky dancers -- those wild FLAILING primary colored fan-powered tube people.

EXT. SANTA CLARITA ROAD. JUPITER'S CLAIM TURNOFF. DAY

They approach a promotional stagecoach sign connected to a few aluminum horses by long, multicolored flagged streamers.

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. PARKING AREA. DAY

OJ parks and gets out. Em gets out and looks up at Jupiter's Claim, a privately owned and multicolored Frontier-Town theme park that presents a glossy mythology of the American West. An over-arching sign above the entrance: "Jupiter's Claim"...

EMERALD
What happened to "Gold Rush"?

OJ
"Gold Rush" went bankrupt. It's been this for three years.

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. MAIN STREET. DAY

Our trio -- OJ, Em, and Lucky -- enter through the front gate past a stoned park employee who lets them in. OJ politely acknowledges. Em does too.

Main Street is in 3/4 scale -- kid-sized and done up like a thriving prospecting town. There's a saloon, gold-panning station, wanted sign booth, kid-size locomotive, petting zoo... and a large, inflatable balloon of a "Kid Sheriff."

Bangs of cap guns pop off as an actor dressed as an OLD TIMEY ROBBER (20's) runs by screaming.

The PARK BROTHERS, Colton Park (13), Phoenix Park (10), Max Park (9) wear cowboy outfits and run through after him, cap guns drawn.

Em walks past a central well. A couple of park-going kids put a proprietary Jupiter's Claim "gold coin" (Jupe Jangle) into a slot on the side of the well.

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They turn an old-fashioned hand-crank and look down the well. “CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK SNAP...”

Em looks down. “POP.” A flash from the well takes an upwards pic of Em, two kids, and sky.

OJ and Lucky head down Main Street. OJ conspires on the way. They arrive at the end of the Main Street.

OJ sadly, but routinely, passes Lucky off to Park Employee # 2 who recognizes him. In the background is a small outdoor concert venue.

OJ
Lucky. Hang tight, I’ll be back.

EMERALD
How many you sold...? How many?

OJ
10.

EMERALD
You sold 10 of Pop’s horses?

OJ
I’m gonna get ‘em back. Can you stay out here?

EMERALD
Why?

OJ
It’s a developing business relationship, and you’re a liability right now.

EMERALD
How am I a liability?

OJ
Don’t promote your fuckin’ side shit on a job--

She squints.

OJ (CONT'D)
-Actor, singer, dancer, seamtress, motorcycles-

EMERALD
Oh my god! Why you mad about that?

OJ (CONT'D)
You wanna promote something, promote this business.--

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EMERALD
-No. No, OJ. First of all, that's not my "side shit." This is. Second: If anybody's a liability....

OJ
Fuck you!

EMERALD
Nah fuck you; Fuck that!

Moments later...

INT. JUPE'S OFFICE. HALLWAY. DAY

They enter and pass AMBER PARK (Caucasian, 30) with forced smiles, Jupe's rock and manager. Amber is a matter-of-fact apparent horse enthusiast. She waves them by but stays in her call. Barb, (Caucasian, 45) an accountant, sits by the entrance.

AMBER
(on the phone)
--Hi there, it's Amber again from Jupe's Claim..?

(O.C.)
Hi, Amber. How can I help you..?

AMBER
I'm calling back with good news actually. It *does* look like we were able to squeeze out a couple extra press passes for the upcoming "friends and family preview..."

(O.C.)
I'm sorry what is this in reference to--?

AMBER
--No apology necessary. This is in reference to the biggest, "bestest", brand new live show we have coming up here at the park which is sneaking right up on us. It's Friday the 9th. And if you'd like, I can go ahead and put you down for two tickets, but I gotta tell you these things are going like hotcakes, so I would book 'em while we got 'em...

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INT. JUPE'S OFFICE. "KID SHERIFF ROOM". DAY

They enter and see Ricky "Jupe" Park (Korean American, 35), immediately acts more alert. A wiry guy with white top teeth been relaxing at his desk staring at a painting of Owls. He's pleasant.

The main focus of the office interior, and the park's clear inspiration is the movie "Kid Sheriff," in which Jupe starred when he was 11. In the movie, a wishing well teleports 3 contemporary kids to a rich and wimpy Wild West Town in need of a sheriff. Jupe played one of the sidekicks to the main kid!! In the poster young Jupe winks and shoots a "finger gun."

JUPE
OJ! Thanks for coming up!

OJ
My sister, Em.

EMERALD
How you doin'?

JUPE
Hi there. Who'd you bring me?

OJ
Lucky. My 2nd best horse, he just lost focus. I did too, but I can't fire myself...

Jupe laughs.

JUPE
That's good.

OJ
Actually, I was hoping to--

EMERALD
--Hold up. That's you?

JUPE
So, yeah. That's me.

EMERALD
You're literally the Asian kid from "Kid Sheriff"?

OJ
Em.

JUPE
No, it's fine. Yeah, I was "Lil' Jupe."

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Jupe casually tosses the wink plus finger gun move out.

EMERALD
Wow. Okay-- you were my favorite. Can I get a-- real quick?

JUPE
Sure.

OJ
--You mind if we talk...?

OJ has stopped the momentum and fun.

JUPE
Yes. Of course. Su casa es mi casa.
(To Emerald)
Please browse away...

EMERALD
I sure will.

Jupe, activated by the attention. Em walks around the office looking at stuff.

JUPE
So, same deal, yeah? 11.5?

OJ
Yes. Thank you; actually--

EMERALD
3D! Whatever happened to that Black boy? He was good.

OJ
Stop, stop.

EMERALD
He was good.

OJ
I know how this is gonna sound, but I actually wanted to lay some groundwork for a pathway to buying some of ‘em back.--

JUPE
Oh yeah? Yeah, yeah. Actually OJ, that offer I made your dad is still on the table.

EMERALD
--Yoooo. Wait.

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Jupe is eagerly distracted by Em. He gets up.

JUPE
So that...
(To OJ)
OJ, have I shown you this?

OJ stands, trying not to act annoyed. Em stands in front of a door with a mounted framed Mad Magazine. On the cover, Alfred E. Newman crouches on a table in a chimp costume on a sitcom set. With a multicolored birthday hat and a handful of pink cake, Newman grins slyly at us as if to say “What Me Worry”?

JUPE (CONT'D)
This is my “Gordy’s Home!” room.

EMERALD
“Gordy’s Home!” Wait a minute.

JUPE
So, “Gordy’s Home!” is the short-lived but fabled sitcom I starred in ‘96 after “Kid Sheriff” blew up.

EMERALD
Yo, our dad talked about this. The monkey went crazy or something?

JUPE
You know I usually charge a fee for this.

He manually pushes the door open revealing a dark room with display cases in it. Jupe flicks on the lights.

INT. THE GORDY ROOM. DAY.

Jupe leads Em and OJ inside. The room is a collection of all things “Gordy’s Home!”. Posters, signed headshots of the cast, production stills from the 90’s sitcom that tells the story of... the Houston family: Brett (Caucasian 38, rocket scientist), Margaret (Caucasian, 36, astronaut), their teenage daughter Haley (Caucasian, 14), and “Jupe” as Mikey (Korean American, 12) the adopted son. They’re an American milquetoast sitcom family who live with, and accept as one of their own, Gordy, a mischievous, polo and pant-wearing chimp who has a knack for solving problems.

HE CHUCKLES. They pass a large photograph of Lil’ Jupe on set with Gordy, practicing their trademark fist bump.

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JUPE
That was the first exploding fist bump.

EMERALD
Really? Y'all came up with that?

Em and OJ view blood-speckled wardrobe from a 12-year-old Jupe, showcased on a white mannequin among a few other props from the day of the attack. Also present is a single teenage girl's blue-jean shoe with one drop of blood on it.

JUPE
So, as I said, "Gordy's Home!" began airing in the fall of '96 and it was an immediate hit. Ratings were huge. Pretty good reviews, and then one day, we're shooting an episode in Season 2 entitled "Gordy's Birthday." And, boom. One of the chimps that played Gordy just hit his limit. It was 6 minutes & 13 seconds of havoc. The network tried to bury it, but it was a spectacle. People are just obsessed.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
Yeah, yeah... right...

EMERALD (CONT'D)
Wow, you're kiddin' me...OJ, you know about this?

OJ
They don't let you use chimps any more. In part because of that.

JUPE
There's a growing "Gordy's Home!" fan base out there. A Dutch couple paid me 50k to spend a night in here. I didn't ask. I didn't want to know.

EMERALD
That's crazy. So what happened, really?

JUPE
You haven't seen the "Bad Gordy" sketch on SNL? They pretty much nailed it better than I could.

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EMERALD
Wait. “Bad Gordy!” I heard of it.

JUPE
-So it’s Darryl Hammond as Tom, Ana Gasteyer as Phyllis, Cheri Oteri is Mary Jo Elliot. Scott Wolf’s the host; he’s me. But, of course, the star of the sketch is Chris goddamn Kattan as Gordy... and he *is* undeniable. The bit goes like this: Everyone is trying to celebrate the birthday but every time something reminds Gordy of the jungle, Gordy (Kattan) goes off. You know Kattan - eating it up, crushing it, devouring every moment.

Flashback...

INT. GORDY'S HOME! SET. DAY

Lil Jupe is under the “dining room table.” Blood on his face. He’s terrified.

Present day...

INT. THE GORDY ROOM. DAY.

JUPE
Yeah, legendary, and I’ll tell you what-- That was... ahhh!

EMERALD
I’m gonna have to go ahead and look that up on YouTube.

JUPE
Yeah. Totally. Totally.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DUSK

OJ walks back towards the house. Emerald catches up to him.

OJ
I got some work I gotta do.

EMERALD
So are you chilling at all tonight or no?

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OJ
You wanna work?

EMERALD
Hell no.

She continues to walk with him.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
What was that offer..?

OJ
Jupe?

EMERALD
Yeah.

OJ
...He offered to buy the ranch.

EMERALD
Really?! Wow. Interesting. How much?

OJ
Why?

EMERALD
I’m trying to figure out how much of a dumbass you are.

OJ
Big dumbass prolly.

She slows down. He continues.

EMERALD
Yeah. Ayo! So I guess you don’t want to see what’s good with dad’s liquor cabinet then, huh?

He slows down.

OJ
I got that Javi weed too actually.

She follows.

EMERALD
Oh you got that Javi?

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INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. OTIS SR.'S OFFICE. NIGHT

The office has large windows that overlook the property, including a view extending to the Western hills in the distance.

EMERALD
To the man...

OJ sits as Em holds up a large glass of brown liquor to a mounted photo of Otis Sr.

She laughs, drinks.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
Drink.

He drinks.

Emerald refers to a picture of Otis Sr. and a horse with a black diamond on his face.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
Oh shit. Remember Jean Jacket?

OJ
Good horse.

EMERALD
He was supposed to be my first horse. Actually... I was just talking to my therapist about this not too long ago.

OJ
Therapist?

EMERALD
Yes. I fuck one on occasion, and I was telling her about how for my 9th birthday I was gonna get to train Jean Jacket. Remember this?

OJ
Mmm.

EMERALD
And last minute, Pops got some big western, and Jean Jacket wasn't mine any more. Classic Otis Sr.

Em goes to the window. OJ knows this story.

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EMERALD (CONT'D)
I remember standing in this window right here watching you all train my horse...my horse... right there. And I distinctly remember that Pops never looked up at me.

FLASHBACK...

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DAY

Close on 12 year old OJ. With two fingers pointing at his eyes then to hers. The universal symbol for “we see eye to eye.”

Present day...

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. OTIS SR’S OFFICE. NIGHT

EMERALD
But you did, nigga! Remember?

OJ
It was Scorpion King actually. Wasn’t a Western. That was the first job Pops took me on. Wasn’t much fun. Ended up using camels anyway.

EMERALD
The point is... Fuck the point.

OJ
The man was hard headed as fuck.... So are you. That’s it. But at the end of the day, you gotta admit, Pops did something when he made this place. He changed the industry. That’s real. I can’t just let that go.

EMERALD
--Why is Ghost in the arena?

BLACK.

BLACK CARD: GHOST

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EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. OUTDOOR ARENA. NIGHT

OJ walks an unnerving walk towards Ghost who remains perfectly still as OJ arrives at his side.

OJ
Hey. You good?

Ghost huffs.

OJ (CONT'D)
Yeah.

REGGAE MUSIC, “This is the Lost Generation“ by The Lost Generation BLASTS from the house, turning OJ back towards it.

OJ turns to see Em in her drunk groove. She doesn’t hear him.

OJ turns back to the valley just as Ghost leaps over the fence and gallops into the darkness.

Em at the window.

EMERALD
Hey! Where’s *he* goin’?

OJ WHISTLES at Ghost. No response.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. FOOT OF THE SOUTHERN HILLS. NIGHT

OJ arrives in his ATV down by the fence.

OJ WHISTLES HARD into the dark echoey gulch.

Three distant cellphone towers each appear as two red lights in the distance. The farthest tower turns off... OJ notices... the next turns off, then the closest. Odd.

Then the stadium lights that illuminate “Jupiter’s Claim” in the distance go down.

A LONG PANICKED DISTANT BELLOW from Ghost.

OJ stops... It gets quiet.

A BREEZE RIPPLES THROUGH THE GRASS in the canyon towards OJ who kneels.

SHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH.....

His ATV headlights fade.

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OJ looks up. The breeze stops. A few clouds. Fairly still. OJ looks back down at the gulch. The breeze picks up again before passing OJ and continuing through the valley. Disrupting the lone tree.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. OTIS SR.'S OFFICE. NIGHT

Em stops drunk dancing, perplexed as the lights and music slow down to silence and pitch black. The back up generator tries to come on.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. FOOT OF THE SOUTHERN HILLS. NIGHT

OJ doesn't move. The house lights and music begin to wind back on.

Back to normal. A shadow passes a lit patch in the valley accompanied by a distant horse's scream. OJ looks up, catching the tail end of what must have been a large, blimp-sized circular object quickly and silently hurdling a gap in the clouds.

OJ is shook to his core.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. FRONT PORCH. NIGHT

OJ arrives and gets out of his ATV. Em leans out.

EMERALD
You see that? The power..? Where's Ghost....? Where's Ghost?

OJ
...I don't know.

EMERALD
Hold on.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. NIGHT.

OJ stands by Em who rewinds the feed of the single monitor. The image goes black.

EMERALD
Boom. Power went out. See that..?

OJ
Rewind.

She rewinds.

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OJ (CONT'D)
Stop.

She presses “play” moments before Ghost leaps the nearby fence. OJ’s in the image as well.

EMERALD
Ghost talkin’ about “Look at me; I’m not trained. I do whatever the fuck I want!”

OJ shifts uneasy. She looks at his eyes.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
Bro, what’d you see? WHAT?!

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. FRONT PORCH. NIGHT

They both sit in shook wonder for a bit. OJ watches the sky and the horizon. Em watches her brother.

OJ
What’s a bad miracle? They got a word for that?

She thinks.

EMERALD
Nope.

OJ
They told me it was a prop plane or something killed Pops. That shit ain’t never made sense to me. Then tonight down in the service road I heard Ghost make a sound I ain’t never heard a horse make.

EMERALD
But what did you *see?* Hmm?

OJ shrugs and looks at her.

OJ
It was big.

EMERALD
How big?

OJ
Big.

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EMERALD
What'd it look like?

OJ
I don't know. It was fast. Too fast. Too quiet to be a plane.

EMERALD
OJ, are you sayin' what I think you're sayin'?

He nods.

INT. OJ'S HORSE TRAILER. OUTSIDE FRY'S ELECTRONICS. DAY

Em and OJ eat.

EMERALD
I'm telling you we don't need a lot, we just need enough to make our shit look different from everyone else's. You know I ain't trying to run it up. I was just looking online, and I seen a lot of shit.

OJ
You know I'm broke right?

EMERALD
Fine, we'll use my money.

He genuinely laughs.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
Shut up. Look. Boom. There it is. "5-100k."

She shows him her phone.

OJ
Read it.

EMERALD
You read it, dyslexic-ass. Point is, a website like "Cyber Dominion" will pay 5-100k for photographic evidence of UFOs and shit.

OJ
100k?

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EMERALD
5-100k. And that's just what I saw on the first go.

INT. FRY'S ELECTRONICS. AISLE. DAY

Em leads OJ down the aisle with a cart of boxes. The place is dead and fairly cleaned out. They try to act chill.

EMERALD
Now that I think about it, "Fuck Cyber Dominion." This shit here is "a moment." If we get that shit and it looks good, you release it the right way...? I'm talkin' rich and famous for life.
(To a girl)
How you doing? You look pretty today.
(to OJ)
She look like she got a big house...

OJ
How?

EMERALD
How do you put it out?

OJ
Mmm.

EMERALD
That's what I'm sayin'. Don't fall for the quick cash in. We go to the most credible platform to do the story.

OJ
What's that? Like Oprah?

EMERALD
Sure, like Oprah, for example. After that, everybody wants in.

OJ
I'm saying. There's plenty of videos of flyin' shit online. I saw one the other day. Wasn't on Oprah.

EMERALD
I didn't say Oprah: You said Oprah! You love Oprah!

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OJ
Hmm.

EMERALD
End of the day, all of the existing shit online, it’s fake or low quality. No one’s gotten what we’re gonna get.

OJ
What are we gonna get?

EMERALD
“The Shot.”

OJ
What shot?

EMERALD
“The Shot.” The money shot. Singular. Undeniable...

Em pauses...

EMERALD (CONT'D)
The “Oprah Shot.”

OJ
The “Oprah Shot”?

ANGEL
I can help you over here..

EMERALD
Oh shit.

Continuous...

INT. FRY’S ELECTRONICS. DESK. DAY

Em brings their purchases over to ANGEL TORRES (Latinx, 24). He’s exhausted and starts scanning boxes as they place them.

ANGEL
Hi. Thanks for shopping at Fry’s. Did you guys find everything you were looking for today?

EMERALD
Yes...
(reading name tag)
Angel.

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ANGEL
Great! Do you have a card with us?

EMERALD
--No, thank you.

ANGEL
Would you like to--?

EMERALD
--No, thank you.

They shake their heads.

ANGEL
...Okay. Would you like one of our tech support personnel to help with the installation...?

EMERALD (CONT'D)
No.... No... no...no!

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Okay, fine. No install. Suit yourself.

OJ
Is it a hard install...?

ANGEL
For me? No... You're not gonna be able to do it. What happened, you guys get robbed or something?

OJ
Mmm hmm.

EMERALD
--Yes, and then also we do get rolling blackouts up there. Takes the camera out from time to time.

ANGEL
Okay, all new cameras are gonna have backup battery power, so you should be fine.

OJ
But the outages affect power in battery shit too, like cell phones, so...

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ANGEL
Cell phones...? Okay, your cell phones aren’t dropping power, you’re probably just dropping wifi when the system dips. So...that’s technology.

They don’t flinch. Odd.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Or maybe you’re in a UFO hot spot....

EMERALD
(laughs)
No one believes in that.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. DAY

ANGEL
Damn. I didn’t realize you were this far out...

OJ
Mmm.

ANGEL
I don’t mind, though. The smell of horse shit and fresh air.

Angel sniffs the air long and hard.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
WHOOOOOOOO!!!!

The Horses stir.

OJ
Whoa. Don’t do that. Don’t yell like that.

ANGEL
Sorry. And sorry if I was a little shut down this morning.

EMERALD
You were fine-

ANGEL
--I just got out of a four year relationship.

They don’t ask.

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ANGEL (CONT'D)
Yeah... I know it’s a fuckin’ cliche, but I thought she was the one. You know?

It’s still hitting him. He nips the emotion in the bud.

EMERALD
Is this gonna take longer than an hour?

ANGEL
This? Yes.

EMERALD
I’mma pop out.

OJ
Where *you* going?

EMERALD
To the store... I’ll be back... You need something?

Cryptic. Angel holds out his phone with a picture of an attractive actress/model.

ANGEL
Anyway, her name is Rebecca Diaz, She’s an actress/ model, look out for her; she just booked a pilot on the CW... and fuckin’ left me...

He’s processing out loud.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Fuckin’ CW.

OJ is stuck with him; he likes the rage.

Later...

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. CAMERA STATION A. DAY

OJ and Angel look up at the roof security camera that has been replaced with a new model on a swivel mount.

Angel shows OJ the loading screen on his laptop.

OJ
Can you swivel up?

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ANGEL
Uh, yeah.

Angel obliges with automated swivel.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
So the--

OJ
Little more...?

ANGEL
Okay. Yeah.

OJ holds his fingers up to signify “liiittle more.” The monitor is 70% sky.

Angel curiously obliges.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. CAMERA STATION B. DAY

Angel and OJ are now on the foothills of the western hillside setting up another camera (Camera B); this one facing back east towards the house. Angel voluntarily positions the camera mostly skyward again.

ANGEL
Did you know they’re not even called UFO’s anymore? It’s UAP’s now.

Angel leaves room, but OJ doesn’t take the bait.

OJ
Why they gotta change the name?

ANGEL
Exactly. I’ll tell you why, to put people back in the dark. You know how I know? It happened as soon as Navy videos became declassified. Just when people’s eyes were about to open, they start calling it UAP’s and all of a sudden no one gives a shit again. Because no one knows what a fuckin’ UAP is.

OJ
I saw that. The Navy clip. Couldn’t see too much on ‘em though. Coulda been better.

He shrugs. Angel smiles.

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ANGEL
It’s shitty footage of exact proof that there’s an alien civilization out there in the universe.

OJ
So who’s that?

ANGEL
C’mon man the little guys with the big eyes...

OJ
Mmm hmm.

ANGEL
They’re either intergalactic travelers looking for peace, or they’re evolved futuristic humans coming back in time to stop us from destroying the planet, or... world killers. Planetary destroyers. That would mean they’ve been watching us; learning... Waiting for the perfect time to beam us up and put a metal probe up our asses.

OJ
Cool.

ANGEL
“Ancient Aliens,” History Channel. Check it out.

Em in the horse trailer drives towards them. She pulls up and stops halfway through the valley. Near the tree.

EMERALD
AYO! HELP A NIGGA OUT!!!!

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. FIELD. DAY

As OJ and Angel approach, from there Em beams with pride by the back of the horse trailer. A life-sized fake aluminum horse sits in the trailer. A long awkward “Grand Opening” streamer with plastic, multicolored flags hangs off it streaming back 100 feet. She is so sweaty.

EMERALD
You guys know where I can find a couple big strong fellas?!

Off OJ’s look.

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OJ
You good?

EMERALD (CONT'D)
I’m good. You good?

EMERALD (CONT'D)
What...?

OJ
What’s that?

He refers to the streamer hanging out the back of the trailer.

EMERALD
(Performative for Angel)
What? This? It’s just the additional training horse we ordered...

OJ
Where’d you get it?

EMERALD
Don’t worry about that. Come on, help me.

ANGEL
Gotchu.

OJ contemplates the dumbness of the plan.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

Angel, Em and OJ stare at the decoy horse in the field. A ridiculously long, multicolored, plastic flagged streamer hangs from its mouth.

ANGEL
So what is it...? Like bait?

EMERALD
I told you. It’s a “decoy” for horse training.

ANGEL
Okay.

A promotional Jupiter's Claim pickup truck drives up the service road.

EMERALD
Well, shit.

OJ
Shhhhhhiiiit... See?

OJ is pissed enough at Em to temporarily walk away.

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EMERALD (CONT'D)
OJ, wait. It’s good. We good. He doesn’t know shit.

ANGEL
(Nervous)
Oh, man. You guys are doin’ somethin’ shady?

The truck pulls up to the other side of the fence which is still 40 yards away. Jupe waves as he steps out. OJ raises his hand. They’re very far.

JUPE
Hey, there!

EMERALD
Hi! You can stay right there though?!

JUPE
Sure!!! What’s up!

She looks at OJ who begrudgingly concedes.

EMERALD
We’re setting up a decoy! For horse training!!!

JUPE
Oh good... You know we got some of those...!!!

Jupe knows it’s his fake horse. They all do.

JUPE (CONT'D)
Where’d...?!!

EMERALD
Where’d you get yours!?!

JUPE (CONT'D)
I’m not sure really! My wife would know!!

An awkward moment.

ANGEL
Okay... Thanks for stopping by!

OJ
Shhh.

EMERALD
Shhh. You don’t live here.

ANGEL
Sorry. Trying to help.

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JUPE
Sure thing! Hey. I wanted to invite you to our new family live show...!

Jupe takes out a green flier which immediately flies out of his hand up into the wind. He sells it casual, like “flier what flier?”.

JUPE (CONT'D)
It’s Friday at 5pm!

EMERALD
Okay!!

OJ throws him the thumbs up.

JUPE
Thumbs up!?

EMERALD
(aside)
Should I do it?

OJ
(to Em)
Yeah do it.

Emerald throws thumbs up, too.

Jupe returns. OJ doubles down on the thumbs up. Jupe throws up two. OJ initiates an awkward wave; he nods. The other two follow suit.

Jupe lacking closure turns for a little wave then gets back in his truck. He drives away.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DRIVEWAY. DAY.

OJ and Em nurse Cactus Coolers on the porch as Angel heads to his van.

ANGEL
The router is in the shed. I set it up so that if the power goes out on Camera A, Camera B is pointed at the sky in the direction to catch whatever might’ve taken it out. And vice versa....

He waits.

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ANGEL (CONT'D)
I mean... Okay. You're really not gonna tell me what the fuck is going on.

They start walking away.

EMERALD
You'll know soon enough...

ANGEL
Ooh. Cryptic. Okay...

He starts walking away.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
I can monitor the feeds remotely myself if you want... free of charge...

EMERALD
Hell no.

OJ
No. Thank you.

ANGEL
Wham bam thank you ma'am. Fair enough.

Angel gets in the van. He almost forgets.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
One more thing...

They stop.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
You *will* be getting a call asking you how my service was today.--

EMERALD
--Five stars, Angel!--

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Angel drives away, Em turns to join OJ in watching the western sky.

EMERALD
Okay, so what now?

OJ
What you wanna do?

EMERALD
What you wanna do?

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OJ
I got work to do. You wanna help out, you could--

EMERALD
--Good one.

She heads back to her trailer.

BLACK.

BLACK CARD: CLOVER

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. NIGHT

The pale decoy horse gleams in the moonlight.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

OJ lays supplies on his kitchen table.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. EMERALD'S TRAILER. NIGHT.

Em falls asleep while watching an old Oprah Winfrey clip about alien abductions.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

OJ holds a homemade training tool that looks just like the VFX reference ball that freaked Lucky out.

He turns the mirror side back and forth to his face. In the reflection and through the window behind him, OJ sees something. A light has gone on in the indoor arena. Hmm.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. NIGHT

OJ arrives and the sprinklers are on in the indoor dirt pitch.

He turns off the water. Odd.

OJ walks back towards the security room.

Before OJ can get there, the sprinklers start again in the arena. OJ looks back towards the light switch on the opposite side of the arena.

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A round white face with two dark circular eyes, two white hands, and a dark slight furry form emerges from the deep darkness. It walks wrong.

OJ doesn't move.

Another head emerges closer.

As they start towards him, OJ shakes his head and backs up.

OJ
Nope.

He tries to take out his phone camera. Fumbles a bit.

The two figures advance. OJ backs up past the point in which the inner perimeter fence, at least temporarily, obstructs his view of the encroaching beings.

OJ is shook. He turns his camera phone on. He's having trouble with the tech.

The edge of the 4-foot tall divider. OJ fumbles a bit. He stays steady by the stall, waiting.

Then... a white hairless round dome head eclipses the barrier. One large black orb emerges from the divider to peek at OJ.

As OJ turns, a third alien bursts out of a dark stable he thought he'd cleared. The little creature SCREAMS at OJ who instinctively punches it hard in the face, sending it to the ground.

ALIEN 1/COLTON
Ow.

Alien 1 scurries away.

OJ now sees: The alien is actually Colton Park, Jupe's kid in a costume. The other two aliens are Phoenix and Max in costumes. The Park brothers erupt in NERVOUS MISCHIEF on their way out.

ALIEN 2/PHOENIX
HA HA! Did you see that?!?

ALIEN 3/MAX
Whoa!

ALIEN 1/COLTON
OH shit!

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ALIEN 3/MAX
Come on!

ALIEN 2/PHOENIX
Don’t mess with Jupiter's Claim, bitches!!!

ALIEN 3/MAX
SHHHHHHHHH!!!!!

ALIEN 1/COLTON
Ha ha!

ALIENS
HOOOOOOOOOWWWWWWLLLLLLL

Em arrives as OJ processes how close he was to killing a kid.

EMERALD
What happened..?

OJ
The Park kids. They let Clover out.

EMERALD
What? These little punks trying to prank Haywood? It’s on.

OJ
You stole their horse...

EMERALD
Oh. Yeah.

INT. FRY'S ELECTRONICS. NIGHT

Angel at the register after hours.

A senior manager with keys shuffles around. A couple lights turn off.

Copperpot’s Cove wrappers.

Angel watches the security feed on his laptop.

NESSIE (23, Latinx), a mousy and awkward girl, who lurks casually eating Flamin’ Hot Cheetos. She crunches in his ear.

Angel gets startled.

NESSIE
Hey.

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ANGEL
Shit! Whattup, Nessie?

NESSIE
Not much. Stockin' shit. You know, pretty much regular.

He nods.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. NIGHT

OJ walks out into the valley. Clover stands out there a ways.

OJ whistles as he approaches Clover.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. NIGHT

Em watches camera monitor A, which looks out at the tree and Western hills in hi-def night vision. Sure enough, OJ emerges at the bottom of the screen.

She leans in to get a better look... Was that movement...?

The image goes blurry and then into sharp focus...an ALIEN FACE STARES DEAD INTO CAMERA!

EMERALD
Ohhh shit!!!

She almost falls down but composes herself. LAUGHING.

A praying mantis clutches to the camera presenting an extreme close up.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
I need to take my ass to bed.

As Em chuckles at herself and calms back down. As she walks on she gets a call. Behind her the feed on monitor B winds down to nothing.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
Who dis?

ANGEL (O.S.)
Angel from Fry's.

INTERCUT WITH...

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INT. FRY'S ELECTRONICS. NIGHT

ANGEL
Hey, I’m just callin’ to tell you:
There’s a bug on Camera A.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. NIGHT

EMERALD
I know.--Wait. I thought. We told
you not to watch our shit.--

ANGEL (O.S.)
I know but also: Camera B just went
down.

EMERALD
What?

ANGEL (O.S.)
Camera B.... It’s down...

His words sink in. Em looks at the monitor. Em walks outside.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. NIGHT

OJ bridles Clover.

IT GETS EERILY SILENT. THEN A SLOW HOWL OF WIND.

The light on the shed 70 feet from OJ powers down grabbing his attention.

Clover takes off into the night. OJ’s sent to the ground; rope burning his hand. Clover runs into the night.

The decoy horse 100 yards southwest of OJ, spins into the air in a quick but violent dust devil.

OJ, on the ground, turns to see.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NIGHT

Em emerges and there it is...

Backlit by the moon, a dense low cloud hangs above the valley where the decoy horse was. At the bottom, a large round hole two bus lengths in diameter gaping with darkness; cloud vapor billowing up inside.

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EMERALD
(out to OJ)
HEYYYYYYY!!!!!!

INT. FRY'S ELECTRONICS. NIGHT

Angel is remote watching the security feed which at the moment is just the praying mantis on Camera A.

ANGEL
Okay. Can you get the bug off the thing..?

Angel, through clenched teeth, fiddles with the remote pivot feature on Camera A.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Get. The. Fuck. Off. The. Thing.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NIGHT

Em stops in her tracks. Behind her, the horses act up in their stalls. She takes a step back but her knees almost buckle. She steels herself.

ANGEL (O.S.)
What do you see? Do you see lights or anything?

EMERALD
(whispering)
It’s in the cloud. It’s in the cloud.
(screaming)
OJ!!!! IT’S IN THE CLOUD!!!!

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. NIGHT

OJ’s getting up and looking at the cloud.

OJ
Mmm mmm.

OJ, deep in the valley, watches the stationary cloud above. From his vantage it’s even more clear. The other clouds move west but the one just west of him is still.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NIGHT

Em by the house.

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EMERALD
Yeah, nah nah nah.
(yelling)
Run OJ, run!

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. NIGHT

The cloud begins drifting towards him. Against the direction of the wind. OJ runs for the shed. The cloud gains on him.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. SHED. NIGHT

OJ bursts into the shed just as the cloud passes overhead.

Clover whizzes by.

OJ watches through the gaps between the slats.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NIGHT

Em’s knees buckle again at the sight. Her phone winds down dead. The house lights do as well.

INT. FRY'S ELECTRONICS. NIGHT

Angel yells in the phone.

ANGEL
Hello? Hello?

NESSIE
What happened to OJ?

ANGEL
It’s fine.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NIGHT

Em looks back at camera A mounted to a pole on the roof of the indoor arena. The praying mantis hangs on it. The little red light. The camera swivels...

EMERALD
It’s still on.

She makes up her mind, and starts running towards the indoor arena.

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EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. NIGHT

Em climbs a small ladder to the roof.

Em, on the roof of the indoor arena, is now throwing Sour Patch Kids at the mantis as the camera keeps swiveling.

EMERALD
Alright you fuckin' praying mantis. You like Sour Patch Kids?

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. SHED. NIGHT

Clover runs in wide circles.

OJ peeks through the doorway. He looks up. The clouds continue to drift, exposing The Object for the first time. There it is; backlit by the moon, a curved and imperfect saucer.

The Object begins to fall. OJ loses sight of it through the slats of the shed, but an intense and chaotic wind kicks up around Clover in mid-gallop.

Through the slats OJ watches as Clover is sucked spiraling upwards into the night with a PIERCING WHINNY THAT ECHOES IN THE VALLEY.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. CAMERA STATION A. NIGHT

Em turns to the valley where The Object flies low through the shadows and over the western hills. Behind her, the praying mantis hops off the camera voluntarily.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. NIGHT

OJ scours the footage. It's all mantis. Em has her bag.

EMERALD
Hey. Where's your shit? Let's go.

OJ
(looking at the monitor)
Haven't seen one of those in a minute.

EMERALD
Fuckin' praying mantis; oh he better pray I don't find his ass, 'cause if I do, I'm gonna eat him.
(MORE)

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EMERALD (CONT'D)
(beat)
Let’s go.

OJ
Where?

EMERALD
I dunno... I got a situation in Atwater texting me back right now.

OJ
It’s not coming again tonight.

EMERALD
I don’t care... No. Nope. No. No. It’s too much. Bro, I ain’t never seen no shit like this. It ain’t worth it.

OJ
Well, you should go then. I gotta get up early anyway. I got mouths to feed.

OJ heads to the house. Em’s bag lowers.

EMERALD
(under her breath)
Shit. Shit shit shit.

FLASHBACK...

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. DAY

OJ works on a saddle.

OTIS SR.
You hear that? Ghost out there, acting all territorial.

OJ
Mmm.

OTIS SR.
I guess some animals ain’t fit to be trained.

Present day...

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INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT

OJ's eyes open. He stares at the nickel that killed his father. It hangs in a plastic bag on the wall.

INT. HOLST'S HOUSE. STUDY. DAY

A secluded eccentric house.

Antlers Holst looks through a display screen on a Steenbeck film viewer. He turns a knob and advances the black and white film.

His phone rings. He answers his phone but continues scanning.

HOLST
Hello...

Intercut with...

EMERALD
Hi, is this Mr. Antlers Holst?

HOLST
Who's this?

EMERALD
What's up? This is Emerald Haywood, from the commercial the other day.

HOLST
Horse girl. I remember you. And your brother...

EMERALD
Horse boy. Yes, he's here too--

HOLST
--"The descendants of the Jockey."

EMERALD
Yeah.

HOLST
Guess I'm talking to motion picture royalty then.
(beat)
How'd you get this number?

EMERALD
Got it from the call sheet.

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Holst now toggles between two brand new frames.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
We have a project. What would you say if I told you we got the offer of a lifetime?

HOLST
Not my lifetime, hopefully.

EMERALD
Ha. Good one. Now I’m just gonna be real with you. We can’t pay a lot up front, not like you’re used to...

Holst slow laughs. OJ lowers his head.

HOLST
I’m a ‘do one for them so I can do one for me’ sort of man. So what is it?

EMERALD
It’s reality...

HOLST
“Reality?”

OJ
Documentary.

EMERALD
Doc! Documentary.

HOLST
Well, that’s better. What’s your story?

EMERALD
About the stuff that dreams are made of, baby.

HOLST
I got a pretty damn superb lemon tart in the oven for about 10 of my closest friends here, so...

OJ signals Em.

OJ
Stop.

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EMERALD
I’m sorry. Can you hold on a second?
(To OJ)
What?

Em thinks she mutes it.

OJ
He’s not here for that. Don’t be cute. Stick to the plan. Say it.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
This is what I do; I don’t come to your job and knock a horse’s dick out your hand.

Holst hears the whole thing. She “unmutes” the phone.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
Yeah, we’re fine. Look. I’ve heard about you; you’re the shit... American Cinema Magazine says you make the impossible shot, possible.

Holst, perusing the footage, stops.

HOLST
That’s impossible.

EMERALD
Antlers, there’s something out here in Agua Dulce. And you might be the only person in the world who can catch it on film. That’s it.

HOLST
Horse girl, this dream you’re chasing... The one where you end up at the top of the mountain...? All eyes on you. That’s the one you don’t wake up from.

The line goes dead. Em felt that.

EMERALD
I don’t like him.

OJ, distracted, walks towards the window. The Fry’s van arrives in the driveway. He draws the blinds.

Em and OJ look at each other.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DRIVEWAY. DAY

OJ and Em approach the Fry’s van. Angel gets out, looking west, intently.

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ANGEL
Holy shit. It’s real.

EMERALD
I don’t know why you’re here, but that was illegal spying on us like that.

Angel keeps looking west.

ANGEL
Wait... You don’t know?

Later...

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

Angel shows OJ and Em on their monitors.

OJ intently watches the rewinding image. On the screen, is basically just the western view with fast motion; the wind on the grass dances, the clouds race across the sky at a heightened pace in reverse...

ANGEL
Tell me when you see it...

They look. He rewinds faster, and it becomes even more apparent. Something’s weird.

Then, they see it on the monitor: One large pluming cloud in the distance is unchanging in form even as other clouds roll by throughout the day.

OJ
There... It doesn’t move.

ANGEL
Exactly.

EMERALD
Well look at that...

OJ starts out. The others follow.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. DAY

OJ, Em, and Angel exit the indoor arena and cautiously view the cloud over the western hills. It sits there alone in the blue distance.

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ANGEL
I went back and scrubbed through the footage. That cloud has been right there at least since I set the cameras up!

OJ
Yeah. Now that you mention it. I'm thinkin' now I probably been looking at that damn cloud every day for the last six months.

He looks at Emerald.

EMERALD
Shit.
(beat)
So then that's them in there right now. And we've been recording. So we got it, right?

ANGEL
Yeah...

EMERALD
Why do you say "yeah" like that? We have proof of aliens on video...

ANGEL
I mean... I wouldn't call it "proof."

EMERALD
Are you serious?

ANGEL
I've seen crazy weather phenomenon online is all I'm sayin'.

OJ
He's right. It's good, but ain't it. Ain't Oprah.

EMERALD
Ain't Oprah.

ANGEL
I need y'all to tell me - is there an alien spaceship in that fuckin' cloud right there?

OJ
It doesn't move like a ship.

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EMERALD
What do you mean?

OJ
What if it’s not a ship?

BLACK.

BLACK CARD: GORDY.

FLASHBACK...

INT. GORDY’S HOME! SET. DAY

Gordy wears his new watch.

TOM
Of course I set it to Icelandic time, because we share a love of the Aurora Borealis, Gordy... And you have no idea how to tell time...

Angle on Phyllis and Lil Jupe. Laughter.

LIL JUPE
Great gift, dad. Way to think things through.

Laugh.

PHYLLIS
Somehow you’d think a man who can get a rocket to space would be able to manage a halfway decent birthday present...Nope.

Tom does a face palm. Lil’ Jupe shakes his head.

LAUGH.

Lil’ Jupe takes out a small wrapped present.

LIL JUPE
You know Gordy? All things considered. Maybe my gift isn’t that bad after all.

Laugh.

MARY JO ELLIOT (O.C.)
HEY, GORDY.

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The family looks to the doorway.

Mary Jo Elliot places a very large wrapped box onto the stage. Lil' Jupe sinks.

MARY JO ELLIOT (CONT'D)
SURPRISE!!!

The audience laughs and claps.

PHYLLIS
Wow! Now that's a gift!

LIL JUPE
Wait a minute! What happened to we both failed at finding good presents?

MARY JO ELLIOT
Here you go, Gordy! Happy birthday!

The box opens and 10 balloons float to the ceiling.

GORDY
Hoo hoo hoo!

THE AUDIENCE LAUGHS AND APPLAUDS.

And.... POP!!!

OVER BLACK. A CRASH. The crowd GASPS as the unthinkable ensues. A panic begins.

INT. GORDY'S HOME! SET. DAY

The attack is still in progress in the living room set.

The audience area is cleared out save for a couple stragglers hiding in the audience.

Lil' Jupe Park hides under the dining room table. The audience is gone. He's alone.

The horror is mostly obscured from Jupe's view by the iconic cream-colored couch. The chimpanzee attacks Mary Jo there. Her legs are still.

Suddenly Tom is out from hiding in the staircase and makes a run for it. Gordy SCREAMS and skitters off in a MANIC SPRINT. He's much faster. We only hear.

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TOM (O.C.)
No! No! No!!!
AHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!! OH GOD!!!!!
OH GOD, PLEASE. GORDY, NO... GORDY,
NO!!!! DOWN!!! HEY! DOWN GORDY!
PLEASE.... AHHHHH Okay, wait...
No... No....! AHHHHHHHGHHHHHH!!!!!!

The APPLAUSE SIGN BLINKS. A moment of calm aftermath. Jupe is petrified.

Jupe focuses on Mary Jo's right denim shoe which has come off her foot in the attack and has landed perfectly upright on its heel with one drop of blood on it.

Gordy returns with a dissonant gaze; closer now. His face and hands are red. The birthday hat begins to irk Gordy. He shakes his head and HUFFS before pulling it off.

Then Gordy sees Jupe under the table. Gordy crawls towards Jupe. He holds his paw up in a fist bump.

Jupe sits in abject fear. Gordy prompts for a fist bump. Jupe reaches out his fist.

Their hands approach connection... near contact...

GORDY'S HEAD EXPLODES and he drops...

Present day...

INT. JUPE'S OFFICE. AFTERNOON

Jupe sits in his office smiling; deep in thought. Amber paces. She stops to rub his hand.

AMBER
Feelin' good?

Jupe nods. He's clear. Happy.

JUPE
Yep, feelin' good.

AMBER
Good. Run it one more time, babe?

JUPE
What if I told you...

BLACK.

BLACK CARD: LUCKY

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EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. PORCH. AFTERNOON

Em vapes.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA ROOF. AFTERNOON

OJ arrives near the ladder to Camera Station A.

Angel tarps the camera on the roof of the indoor arena.

ANGEL
Storm’s comin’. Just tarpin’ up. Just to be safe.

OJ notices something: The green Jupiter's Claim flier that Jupe brought before sits pleasingly in a pile of horse shit.

The flier reads “The Jupiter’s Claim: Star Lasso Experience! Friday, September 9, 5:00pm”

The clip art of the horse has OJ transfixed. He marches off.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Where are you goin’?

OJ
I’mma go get Lucky.

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. STADIUM. AFTERNOON

We emerge in the back of a semicircle of bleachers.

AMBER (O.S.)
Now we’re not gonna let a few clouds kill our fun today, are we folks? So, without further ado, welcome to the Jupiter’s Claim Star Lasso Experience!

ENTHUSIASTIC BUT LIMITED APPLAUSE.

In the center is a platform, and on the platform is a giant box cloaked in a royal green curtain. Behind it is that sheer open country leading to hills and horizon much like it is at OJ’s Ranch.

There are 40 audience members scattered across the bleachers.

Smatter of applause.

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Jupe comes out to smooth-twang, ambient, important sounding music, but the PA system hits some feedback which echoes wide into the canyon.

JUPE
How's everyone feelin' today? Alright! Quite a doozy today.

He gets 'em clappin'.

JUPE (CONT'D)
Round of applause for my Amber. I'll tell you that woman is a saint for putting up with all my craziness.

Applause.

JUPE (CONT'D)
Shout out to these knuckleheads up there. The staff...!

STAFF
Whooo!!!

Though a few employees are still working, the dozen 20-somethings who have clocked out sit mostly in the back row having beers.

JUPE
Alright, settle down! My lord.

Jupe CLEARS HIS THROAT.

JUPE (CONT'D)
Okay. A great actress, an old co-star of mine, and my first crush: Mary Jo Elliot...!

Mary Jo, now mid-40's in an electric wheelchair, wears a hat, a veil, and a t-shirt of her old character from "Gordy's Home!". She stands for the applause.

JUPE (CONT'D)
Ah, well. Anyways. You ready?

Small applause.

JUPE (CONT'D)
Aw come on that ain't nothin'. Are you ready?!?

They cheer.

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JUPE (CONT'D)
Here we go!

SOFT AMERICANA MUSIC begins.

Jupiter addresses the crowd but he’s different.

JUPE (CONT'D)
What if I told you that in about an hour you’ll leave here different. See, every Friday for the last six months, right here in this spot, my family and I have bore witness to an absolute spectacle. One you’re gonna see today. So if I can just take you back to that first night.

A Jupiter’s Claim employee clumsily changes the music.

JUPE (CONT'D)
I had come over to gather what we call a straggler: A chestnut horse named “Trigger.” Now I can barely see my hand in front of my face for the fog. But I swear on my wife and children’s lives at 6:13pm I see a flying saucer descend through the mist. Ol’ Trigger takes off straight into the gulch. Well... It’s like he was goin’ home.

Amber approves. Jupe looks into the sky.

The large rectangular box in the center of the stage releases its walled curtains which fall to the ground revealing Lucky, OJ’s horse, inside a glass chamber. Facing the gulch.

JUPE (CONT'D)
Now to be clear, what we saw was a flying saucer, no doubt about that, slightly flatter in front with a circular hole in the bottom two school bus lengths wide. Ladies and gentlemen, I kid you not. We are being surveilled by an alien species I call the “Viewers.” Though they’ve yet to emerge from their ship, I believe they trust me. If they didn’t I’m not sure any of us would be here right now. And so, as I said, in just under an hour, “The Star Lasso Experience” is gonna change you.

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NERVOUS LAUGHTER as folks continue to lean in.

JUPE (CONT'D)
But first, my sons are gonna come out here and do a little number. Would that be all right...?

AMBER
(to her sons)
Let me see your hustle, go go go.

JUPE
My little satellites, Colton, Phoenix, Max-- love you, buddies!!

EXT. SKY. AFTERNOON

The “grand opening” streamer bellows from The Object as it looks down at Jupiter’s Claim. At the top of the long streaming tape, where the decoy horse should be, it’s clear that the ribbon is tangled in the inner workings of The Object.

It’s waiting.

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. STADIUM. AFTERNOON.

Jupe clearly wasn’t expecting The Object to be so visible and stationary. It’s acting weird.

He looks at Amber who frowns. Someone starts a SLOW RHYTHMIC CLAP. The next cloud overtakes The Object, hiding it again...

CROWD MEMBER
There they are!

CROWD MEMBER 2(O.C.)
Hey... I see it!

The AUDIENCE TURNS AND MURMURS.

MORE IN THE CROWD BEGIN TO FIND IT. The Object BELLOWS.

JUPE
Stay in your seats. So that was new. They’re early...

AMBER
(stage whisper)
They’re giving us a real show today!

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JUPE
They sure are. They are giving us a real show here today...! Um.... Uh...

The crowd is getting a little restless.

The clouds part again and The Object is revealed: same spot, same awkward angle.

The crowd, all looking in the right place at the same time, react with sheer collective chilling awe. A silence. That thing looks real.

The fun commences but is tainted by collective anxiety.

JUPE (CONT'D)
Okay. They're ready. We're ready. Lucky, sst, sst... Go on!

Jupe pushes a button to open the glass case. The gates open, but Lucky doesn't budge.

AMBER
Cell phones off, y'all!!!

Any sense of order at the event is devolving.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Bear with us now, trained animals can be unpredictable.

Jupe turns to the clouds. They drift by, but this time: no Object.

Jupe freezes, his eyes searching the sky. The crowd energy dies down; the slushie machines too.

THEN THE SOUND FROM BEFORE: MUFFLED AND QUICKENING WIND CLICKS.

IT'S HERE ALREADY JUST ABOVE. The crowd looks in unison.

Slow Motion:

Jupe looks up. The grand opening flags lower from the bottom of an overhead cloud.

He looks back at the crowd who become rapidly more afraid. He looks up again.

As the wind kicks up and the shadow descends overhead, he realizes what he's done. He almost has to laugh.

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BLACK.

INT. THE OBJECT. DAY

The Santa Clarita landscape whizzes by below. We are moving fast and rising inside a LARGE CAVERNOUS SPACE.

Forty people scream in utter panic as they're helplessly whipped up by a wind vortex through a circular opening below.

A massive flat sail-like mass undulates within the saucer, conducting the wind event around and through its internal pipings.

The attendees of the Jupiter's Claim Star Lasso Experience, are funneled into an orifice in the inner top.

A dark banded iridescent square observes.

INT. THE ESOPHOGUS. DAY

Deeper inside, the 40 park attendees are pushed upwards through a narrow tract. They MOAN, disoriented as they're pushed by the flat "sheet-like" musculature. Each of the spectacle viewers MANGLED in their own way, piled in a single file line, one above the other. A vertical chain. At the top, a freckled cowgirl can't go anymore. Lodged in the tract is non-other than the decoy horse Emerald stole.

The force squeezes and the People SCREAM!

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. MAIN STREET. DAY

OJ enters the turnstiles to an eerie calm. A couple chickens walk around.

A scar in the earth through mid-Main Street ends at the freshly "exploded" petting zoo.

A pig is on the roof of the church. OJ continues up Main St.

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. STADIUM. DAY.

OJ approaches the stadium. Green umbrellas and tables tossed everywhere.

OJ enters through the animal entrance tunnel.

SLUSHIE MACHINES SPIN.

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OJ stops short of entering the stadium. Lucky is still in the glass case.

OJ eyes the “home cloud” backed up by the encroaching storm.

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. STADIUM. ANIMAL ENTRANCE. DAY

The Object exits the large “home cloud” miles away and tucks into a closer one.

Terror. OJ, WHISTLES a soft whistle to Lucky. He gestures.

OJ
Come on... Lucky!

Lucky waits still; the last thing it was trained to do.

OJ (CONT'D)
Come on, come on, come on.

Eventually Lucky takes a step out.

The Object exits the cloud and climbs to a higher, closer one. OJ considers.

The Object, closer, moves laterally now from one cloud to another. It’s close enough to see it’s not a perfect circle. It’s flatter on one side. The front. Through its movement it remains facing them. Stalking.

A Predatory CLICKING from The Object as it approaches.

OJ (CONT'D)
Lucky! Lucky!

THE SLUSHIE MACHINE WINDS DOWN. OJ hides in the tunnel as The Object enters a cloud just above. HE BREATHES.

OJ PEEKS. The Object peeks back. It’s gone.

Then quickly from an unexpected location in the cloud, we catch The Object in mid vertical descent. It comes fast and fierce like a predatory bird; then halfway down its fall, The Object flattens out hole side down, pointing it at Lucky.

Everything is pulled towards the abduction for a moment. Lucky, in panic, has leapt towards The Object vanishing in the hectic twister as the glass case behind him spins up and the massive Object continues overhead.

OJ tries to run too late. He’s caught in a dusty updraft; grabs the wall but is slammed against the ceiling.

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BLACK.

EXT. JUPITER’S CLAIM. STADIUM. ANIMAL ENTRANCE. NIGHT

It starts to rain on OJ’s head waking him up.

He lays in the tunnel of the Star Lasso Experience surrounded by detritus. Bloody head.

Before he can lament, Lucky, in the rain, comes into view.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

RAIN.

Em sifts through boxes of Hi8 cassettes.

Angel arrives from outside. He’s trembling.

ANGEL
It’s done. I’ll be over in the morning. Or you guys could rip the shit off yourselves, it’s all the same...

EMERALD
No I like you doing it...

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Of course you do. See you tomorrow.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
See you.

Angel leaves.

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. PARKING AREA. NIGHT

It’s raining. OJ shuts the horse trailer’s door. He takes out his phone as he enters the cab and drives away.

INT. ANGEL’S VAN. ENTRANCE. NIGHT

Angel gets inside and turns the van on. “Sunglasses at Night” by Cory Hart plays on his tape deck.

INT. OJ’S HORSE TRAILER. NIGHT

It’s raining. OJ drives. He calls.

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OJ
Pick up. C'mon, c'mon.

INTERCUT WITH...

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

FULL RAINSTORM OUTSIDE. Em turns on an old Haywood Hollywood Horses promo video made by Otis Sr.

Em sees her phone vibrating on the couch. She picks it up.

OJ (O.C.)
I was right. It's not a ship.

EMERALD
What happened...?

INT. ANGEL'S VAN. ENTRANCE. NIGHT

He drives about 70 feet from the house.

The radio winds down. He looks up at the light in his car, it dims. Then his van WINDS DOWN. It drifts to a stop.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

As Em struggles to understand, the house lights flicker a bit, then the power begins to "drain." OJ's voice winds down.

OJ (O.S.)
It ate them, Em. It ate all of them. It's alive, it's an animal and it thinks that this is its home...

Emerald is shook by that.

INT. OJ'S HORSE TRAILER. NIGHT

OJ starts punching the wheel.

OJ
EM!!

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

THE HOUSE LIGHTS ARE OUT.

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Angel busts in the door. He grabs a large kitchen knife and runs to Em in the living room.

ANGEL
We’re in trouble.

They sit and BREATHE HARD in the darkness. The RAINSTORM POUNDS THE ROOF. A LARGE POCKET OF SILENCE SOFTLY approaches above.

THE RAIN ON THE ROOF INTENSIFIES BEFORE BEING QUICKLY SCOOPED OFF ENTIRELY.

Em looks out the window as a wall of rain continues to move away from the house.

The wall stops. Emerald turns. A circular wall of rain falls around the house like a tubular waterfall. Angel keeps hiding under the dining room table with a kitchen knife.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
(Whisper)
What the fuck, what the fuck. Who the hell is that, who the hell is that? Em?!

She points above. “It’s above us” she mouths.

A HARMONIC HOWL BELLOWS OVERHEAD AS THE MONSTER ABOVE “RETCHES” A COUPLE OF TIMES. The fourth retch RELEASES A BARRAGE OF LOUD THIPS AND DINGS ON THE ROOF. Panic.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Oh God! Something very bad is happening.

After a few moments of silence it happens again. MORE DINGS. A LOUD DONG!

WINDOWS SHATTER as a massive smattering of mostly small hard metal objects pelt the house and roof, A LOUD DANG!!!

Em and Angel make themselves low on the floor.

The DINGS NEVER STOPPED.

Em and Angel wait on the floor.

WATER HITS THE ROOF AGAIN. LIGHTNING.

RED RAIN runs down the window.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
We’re fucked.

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Something lands HARD On the roof!! Silence.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NIGHT

BLOOD RAINS from The Object onto the house.

INT. OJ’S HORSE TRAILER. NIGHT

OJ’s vehicle fails as it turns into the entrance driveway. Wipers stop. Can’t see. He PEERS.

LIGHTNING creates a silhouette hanging over the house. About five times its width. Metallic objects glint on the roof.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Em sits in terror as the rain turns into silence over the house.

INT. OJ'S HORSE TRAILER. NIGHT

OJ can barely see without the windshield wipers.

An oddly steady wind approaches.

RAIN STOPS.

OJ carefully opens his door.

LIGHTNING reveals the saucer. Huge. Just overhead.

He looks up. It’s above him. The circular disk with the dark circular hole in the center.

The Object WAILS as OJ gets back in the car.

OJ
Nope.

After a thick silence...

A HECTIC SMASH OF METAL THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD.

OJ, from just shielding himself... looks to the passenger’s seat. The decoy horse looking at him.

OJ is still. He locks the car door.

Hours later...

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EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DAWN

Foggy morning. The house lights come back on.

INT. OJ'S HORSE TRAILER. DAWN

OJ is tired. His truck HUMS to life again. OJ too.

SECONDS LATER, Angel's van, 30 feet ahead, winds up as well. Headlights, wipers, radio.

OJ inches forward.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DAWN

Rain is done. Mist.

Keys, cell phones, Jupe Jangle, glitter the ground in a circle around the house. The roof is littered; coins jutting from the wood. Mary Jo's wheelchair is up there.

The decoy horse, is stuck in the passenger's side of OJ's truck, its long grand opening flag ribbon draped on the roof and hood and dragging on the ground.

Three large clouds hang over the valley. They all slowly drift away.

OJ leans forward and peeks up.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Em and Angel are also awake but tired.

ANGEL
Em! OJ's coming.

EMERALD
Let's go!
(whispering to herself)
I gotta get out of this house.

Em turns to the eastern window to see OJ's vehicle coming slowly. She goes to the western window. The clouds continue to drift away.

ANGEL
Can't we just wait..?

EMERALD
You can.

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ANGEL
No, dude. We're alive because we stayed here!

EMERALD (CONT'D)
I gotta get out of this house!!!

INT. OJ'S HORSE TRAILER. DAY

OJ drives past the van. Then 60 feet from the house, OJ's truck dies again. The music emanating from the Fry's van slows but doesn't die. THE HOUSE POWER GOES OUT TOO.

OJ sees the two arguing inside.

Okay. It does seem to be drifting away within the clouds.

The Object, though hidden, has surely stopped again.

OJ sees Em and Angel watching through the window. They're getting ready to run. They don't notice the house lights back off.

OJ
Wait. wait.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. ENTRANCE. DAY

OJ, thinking fast, leaves his truck and heads to Angel's van.

He opens the driver's door of the van which hums with a slowed down radio.

Em and Angel slip out of the house quick. They scan West before doubling back and booking for OJ.

OJ watches as The Object slides quickly from the furthest and highest of the three clouds to the second lower and closer.

Em and Angel book towards OJ. The shadow in the clouds behind them begins to emerge and descend towards them.

OJ watches as it comes from high, the shadow swooping down through the clouds. They won't make it. No way. Near panic, then a calm comes over him. A realization.

FLASHBACK...

INT. STUDIO STAGE. COMMERCIAL SET. DAY

OJ is back on set with Lucky.

BUSTER
Oh hey, horsie.

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OJ
Don’t look him in the eyes, please.

The VFX ball comes in and the mirror side swivels towards Lucky, the reflection of his eye causing him to rear up KICK the makeup bag.

Present day...

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. ENTRANCE. DAY

OJ diverts his gaze downward.

A moment of silent faith....

The VAN’S MUSIC SLOWS as the shadow passes overhead.

Finally. FOOTSTEPS ARRIVE. Em and Angel hop in the van which hums to life.

OJ looks up as he gets in the driver’s seat. Nothing. The Object is gone.

EMERALD
Let’s go!

OJ drives.

INT. ANGEL’S APARTMENT. DAY

Angel opens up his place: a tiny one bedroom in disarray. Movie posters, video games, Mountain Dew. Scented candles and other remnants of Rebecca Diaz. Clutter spills off the “mail table” as they enter.

ANGEL
Come in.

Later...

INT. ANGEL’S APARTMENT. DAY

MUSIC. Em and Angel wear VR glasses.

OJ is focused on the sky outside.

INT. HOLST’S HOUSE. NIGHT

Antlers Holst scrolls through footage on a Steenbeck while listening to the news.

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HETTY CHANG (O.C.)
I’m here in Agua Dulce, California and the whereabouts of those 40 guests and employees of a local western theme park are still unknown. The sheriff’s office has had their hands full trying to identify the unaccounted for. Until they do, only one thing is certain. There is something strange happening out here in Agua Dulce.

ON A WINDOW ON HIS LAPTOP. THE 11:00 NEWS.

Hetty Chang reporting.

OFFICER REYES
Security cameras were off at the time, other than that we have no reason to suspect foul play. We did have a considerable amount of rain come through here last night, so we haven’t ruled out flash flooding as possibly having played a part.

INT. COPPERPOT'S COVE. FAST FOOD. NIGHT

Em and Angel are high as kites. Eating hard. OJ sits across from them in a booth, he waits patiently.

ANGEL
You can never go wrong with a fried fish sandwich. Tartar got tang.

EMERALD
Tartar got tang.

OJ
I don’t think it eats you if you don’t look it in the eye.....

Em puts her fish sandwich down. Meal and fun ruined. Angel sinks as dread reinvades his being.

ANGEL
RTR... Bro... like read the room.

EMERALD
Nobody wanna talk about that.

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EXT. COPPERPOT'S COVE. PARKING LOT. NIGHT

OJ stands calm and collected. He expected a freak out.

OJ
Every animal got rules.... We know what it wants.... We know how it comes...

ANGEL
We don't really know shit.

EMERALD
OJ, what do you want me to say! I'm sorry? I was wrong?! It was dumb?!

OJ
It wasn't though. "Own the moment;" it's good, but the moment about to pass; and we don't own shit.--

EMERALD (CONT'D)
--Stop. Stop this shit!

ANGEL
I assume you guys are crashing at my place? Because, you can. I'm not going back to the fuckin' monster umbrella.

Angel walks away and gets in the van.

OJ and Em stand off.

OJ
I gotta feed 'em; let Lucky out. There's shit to do.

EMERALD
Always. Always some shit to do.

Em walks away to blow off steam. OJ watches.

Em's phone rings. As she walks away she pulls her phone out. She looks at it; she slows down; 50 feet away she turns back.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DRIVEWAY. DAY

OJ checks on Lucky, still in the horse trailer where they left him yesterday.

Holst's vintage car is parked there. He stands there watching the "home cloud" through a viewfinder.

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The trio approach. The “home cloud” hangs in the distance.

HOLST
There’s a wheelchair on your roof.

EMERALD
Hi.

He takes in the sight of the cloud.

HOLST
That cloud hasn’t moved an inch. So I guess you’re not completely full of shit.

EMERALD
Thanks. Thank you.

ANGEL
Thank you. The concept of extraterrestrial animals in the sky is not a new thing. You know people been trying to get pictures of these things since like the fifties..

HOLST
(cutting Angel off)
So how do we see it?

OJ
It’s gonna be hungry again. So you know... just ring the dinner bell.

It’s sinking in for Holst.

Moments later...

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. OTIS SR.’S OFFICE. DAY

The four nervously navigate the room around a large map of the terrain.

OJ
So we know what it doesn’t eat. That fake horse and flags messed it up good. Got stuck in its windpipes or something. I bet it ain’t gonna fuck with flags like that in a minute.

EMERALD
Yeah.

Angel makes a face.

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EMERALD (CONT'D)
We pissed it off.

OJ
We’re not the reason it settled down. That was Jupe. He got caught up tryin’ to tame a predator. You can’t do that. You gotta enter an agreement with one.

HOLST
Yeah... ask Siegfried and Roy.

ANGEL
Okay, asking as someone who was in the house when the shit went down. How do you enter an agreement with the UFO, the Alien... Entity... Or whatever you wanna call it.

OJ
Jean Jacket... Call him Jean Jacket.

Emerald hears it.

HOLST
So how bout this? We send Jean Jacket some horses out there in golden hour and see what happens...

Angel finds it low key funny.

ANGEL
Nah. Horse people.

HOLST
Then why don’t you set them free?

OJ
We’re not doing that.

HOLST
Ok. So who’s gonna go down there and get the star out of his trailer?

OJ
Me. I’ll get him out.

They’re silenced.

OJ (CONT'D)
Where do you want it?

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Holst moves a car Monopoly piece onto the map.

HOLST
You draw him out here. I'm here on this ridge.

INTERCUT WITH...

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. PORCH. DAY

Holst sets down a sleek and special case and opens it up showing OJ, Em, and Angel what's inside.

Dorothy, a beautiful custom 35mm camera that's made from parts of an ARRI 2C with a customized hand crank.

ANGEL
Oh shit.

HOLST
I made her myself. No electricity.

Em and OJ look at each other.

OJ walks away. Em sits on the porch railing.

EMERALD
Didn't I tell you this motherfucker was gonna come up here with a non-electrical camera?! Let's go boy!!

OJ nods. He can't help but laugh like it's the first time.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. OTIS SR.'S OFFICE. DAY

OJ places the horse.

OJ
I've been up under it a couple of times now. I get him. It's an animal. Don't turn your back on a bear, don't wear red around a bull. It's like that. You don't look at it unless you want its attention.

INTERCUT WITH...

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. OUTDOOR ARENA. DAY

OJ trains LUCKY, the black horse.

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OJ shakes a broomstick with plastic milk jugs taped to it near Lucky.... Lucky stays still.

CONTINUOUS:

EXT. USED CAR DEALERSHIP. DUSK

Em waits across the street from the used car dealership in OJ's truck with the windshield removed.

The lone employee closes up shop, turning off lights and turning off each of the multicolored glowing wavy tube people which wilt to the ground.

EMERALD
Goodnight Mr. Storeman.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. OTIS SR.'S OFFICE. DAY

ANGEL
I call top hat.

EXT. FRY'S ELECTRONICS. NIGHT

Angel conspicuously loads boxes into his van.

OJ (V.O.)
And we ain't got a lot of time. One day, two days tops. Cuz the word is getting out, and when it does, you know people are gonna come and do what they always do. Try to take it all for themselves.

INTERCUT WITH...

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Angel and Holst carry a large camera up into a camouflaged tented camera station in the hills.

CONTINUOUS...

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. PARKING AREA. NIGHT

There are news vans parked outside Jupiter's Claim.

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OJ stands guard in the parking lot holding a canvas duffel bag. Angel fumbles around under the hood of one of the attendees of the Jupiter's Claim show's car.

ANGEL
Thank you, dead people.

He puts another car battery in the van and goes for another.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. OTIS SR.'S OFFICE. DAY

EMERALD
Fine. Thimble. That's the one I wanted anyway.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. EMERALD'S TRAILER. DAY

Em sews a parachute out of sky dancer material on her sewing machine.

OJ (V.O.)
Well let 'em come. Ain't gonna matter. It's what we about to do. They can't erase that.

INTERCUT WITH...

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. DAY

OJ and Em activate a sky dancer near Lucky.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. OTIS SR.'S OFFICE. DAY

OJ concludes.

OJ
It's big. It's fast. It's got a lot of spirit. But anything with spirit can get broke.

HOLST
So you break it. I'll get the shot.

The plan sinks in.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. DINING ROOM. NIGHT

Next night. Night before energy. Crickets.

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The four, tired from set up, eat in silence. Lost in thought. Scared.

ANGEL
Hey. What we're doing is important, right? Like, what we document is gonna do good. Besides the money and the fucking fame, like we can save some lives or save Earth even right...?

OJ and Em nod.

EMERALD
Yeah.

Silence.

HOLST
Well he came down to earth and it hid in a the tree. I said Mr. Purple People Eater, don't eat me. I heard him say in a voice so gruff, "I wouldn't eat you 'cause you're so tough." He was a one eyed one horned flying purple people eater, one eyed one horned flying purple people eater, one eyed one horned flying purple people eater. Sure looks strange to me...

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DAWN

The cloud stretches in the distance.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. OTIS SR.'S OFFICE. DAWN

The map is now with "The Plan" as denoted by Monopoly pieces, a 45mm record, and straight pins.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAWN

Walkie talkies labeled "Statue," "Top Hat," "Race Car," and "Thimble" charge at their station.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAWN

OJ puts on stunt armor under his "Scorpion King" crew hoodie.

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INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. DAWN

OJ puts a “fly hood” on Lucky covering his eyes.

OJ
He ain’t gonna fuck with you.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. PORCH. MORNING

Holst sits on the porch threading film into a camera.

Angel rings the bell.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. OTIS SR’S BEDROOM. MORNING

Fully clothed, Em wakes on top of Otis Sr’s bed.

BLACK.

BLACK CARD: JEAN JACKET

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. MORNING

Early daylight. Clear view of the “home cloud.“

Angel records the “home cloud” with a digital camera.

He notices Holst ingest a pill from a container.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. OTIS SR.’S OFFICE. DAY

EMERALD
Time to wake up the family.

She EASES UP EXUMA, “THE OBEAH MAN” on the record player. It’s rigged to a system of speakers that blasts to the heavens. Em looks out on the sky dancers in the valley.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Angel brings up the controls on his iPad. He hits a button.

ANGEL
Here we go. Come out, come out wherever you are.

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EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

40 primary-colored sky dancers widely scattered throughout the dark countryside ERUPT TO LIFE WITH A GENTLE HUM. The slender glowing forms rise and HUM throughout the terrain.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Holst chuckles while he starts cranking his camera.

HOLST
Well, now how exquisitely stupid is that?

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HOUSE. FRONT PORCH. DAY

Em also watches the dancing field. The sky is getting lighter now. The “home cloud” is visible. She observes Camera Station C where Holst and Angel are.

She and OJ share a look. OJ takes off on Lucky.

She walks into...

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

There are three monitors up. Lookin’ like a full special ops security station. Em peers into the Camera A monitor.

EMERALD
Okay... We’re gonna get you today, Mutherfucker...

A couple hours later...

The upcoming scenes are intercut with the different characters speaking through walkie-talkies in their respective environments....

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DAY

No clouds. Noonish.

We intercut between the team in their respective locations:

Angel and Holst at Camera Station C; and OJ waiting patiently on Lucky near the stables, Em at the security room. They are all a little bored now.

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EMERALD
Where is the feed for Holst's camera? Over.

ANGEL
Couldn't figure it out. Over.

EMERALD
Whatchu mean you couldn't figure it out? Over.

ANGEL
Umm, Holst is shooting on a film camera and all our cameras are digital, so it's a whole thing. Over.

EMERALD
Basically, you forgot about it, over.

ANGEL
Well I had my hands full rigging fifty fucking sky dancers to dead people's car batteries all connected to one fucking control panel, over. Sorry... I'm scared.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. GULCH. DAY

From Camera B. The last sky dancer in a line leading south along the service road drops.

OJ
Man down.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Everyone snaps to attention.

ANGEL
Man down? What...? Where?

OJ
Last dancer, deep in the gulch.

HOLST
Stay on it, Em. I'm stayin' up.

Holst can't see the last sky dancer, but points his camera at the clouds above the gulch.

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INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

Em trains her camera on the downed sky dancer.

EMERALD
Motherfucker.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. GULCH. DAY

--The sky dancer deep down the service road gulch towards Jupiter's Claim -- raises again. Then drops and raises. It loses power and falls.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. WHISTLING FENCE. DAY.

As he arrives at the fence, the sky dancer in the distance pops up again.

ANGEL
Oh it’s back up. Could be a faulty battery.

EMERALD (O.C.)
Alright shot’s up then.

The sky dancer falls again... Then up... Then down... Then up.

OJ
Nah he’s pokin’.

The team’s attention turns to a NEW WHIR belonging to an encroaching electric motorcycle.

HOLST
Who’s this asshole?

ANGEL
Man in black on motorcycle. Over.

EMERALD
No, no, no, no, no, no.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DRIVEWAY. DAY

The motorcycle slows down as he gets to the house.

It’s THE RYDER dressed in black with a round-mirrored helmet. His white motorcycle has a round yellow apathetic faced puffy sticker on it.

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Em approaches the Ryder who has begun photographing the sky without removing his helmet.

EMERALD
Can I help you?

The Ryder keeps shooting.

RYDER
You see that cloud?

EMERALD
Man, who you with?

The Ryder looks at her flashing a solitary “camera eyehole“ cut out of his custom helmet.

RYDER
Oh I’m sorry. Who are you?

EMERALD
Nobody.

RYDER
You don’t look like a nobody to me.

EMERALD
Yeah look, we are doing a camera test... for a Verizon commercial, so I’m gonna need you to clear the road.

The RYDER is mesmerized by the cloud.

RYDER
This whole valley comes up blurry on Google maps. You’re really tucked away back here.

EMERALD
Jupiter's Claim?!?

The Ryder pauses.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
Quicker if you go back the other way.

He turns the camera towards her.

RYDER
Yeah... Actually what did happen with Jupe Park and all those people?
(MORE)

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RYDER (CONT'D)
He was basically your neighbor, right? So what? They vanished...? You believe the flood narrative, do you?

Em backs up.

EMERALD
(on her walkie-talkie)
Fuck, guys. It’s TMZ.

ANGEL
Fuck me.
(over walkie talkie)
Hey guys, Jean Jacket is definitely in those clouds, and he’s definitely coming this way.

RYDER
What’s the matter? Don’t you want to be on TV?

EMERALD
Man, I’m telling you. You do not wanna go that way.

RYDER
Fuck it, your loss, nobody.

The Ryder holsters his camera. He takes off west on the dirt road.

EMERALD
(on walkie as she runs back to security room)
We still rolling? Over.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

HOLST
Goddamn right we are.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

Em enters as the Ryder unknowingly races directly towards danger.

EMERALD
Fellas, here it comes. Over.

The last sky dancer flails in the gulch. The anti-electrical field hasn’t reached the 100-yard mark from the fence yet.

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EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

The Ryder, who is on a mission, zooms West, past OJ.

The sky dancers begin falling in quick succession up the gulch and into the southern valley itself.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

Em sees Camera B monitor go down.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

ANGEL (O.C.)
Pop quiz guys, what happens when an electric bike going 60mph hits an anti-electrical field going in the opposite direction?

The motorcycle meets the invisible boundary where the sky dancers have quickly fallen like dominoes. The motorcycle winds down quickly confusing the Ryder. He wobbles, snakes in the dirt, and wipes out, flying 10 yards to the ground ahead.

OJ/EMERALD/ANGEL
Shhhhhh / Fuck / We’re all going to jail...

Intercut with...

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

They all watch as the body lays there in the “danger zone.”

ANGEL
There’s no way that guy is alive. Over.

The Ryder moves...

RYDER
AAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!

They all curse internally.

HOLST
Ahh shit.

EMERALD
Goddamn! I told his ass not to go... I told him not to go.

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INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

OJ rides over to the where the Ryder lays.

ANGEL (O.C.)
Ahh OJ, where the fuck are you going?

EMERALD
What the fuck is he doing?

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

OJ crosses the boundary where working sky dancers become downed sky dancers.

OJ
I'm going dark. Over.

EMERALD (O.C.)
Okay, no OJ, no. No self-respecting nigg....

The walkie fades out. OJ and Lucky slowly continue forward. Nothing in the clouds...yet.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

Em's pissed.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

OJ, on Lucky, passes the motorcycle. The guy is mangled. Lucky stops short. He doesn't like the mirror.

OJ
(to Lucky)
Whoa whoa whoa, hey hey hey, easy easy.

RYDER
Did you get that on camera?

OJ
Look at me.. Look at me!

RYDER
What happened?

OJ doesn't budge.

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OJ
Listen, we gotta get you out of here. Eyes on me.

RYDER
Where's my camera? I need my camera. Do you see it?

OJ (CONT'D)
Hey! Hey!

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Holst's camera rolls out of film.

HOLST
Okay. Angel, c'mon we gotta reload.

Angel wasn't ready.

ANGEL
Shit.

Angel races the clock to get it done. He moves a tarp off some equipment and grabs a film canister.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

Just then the downed sky dancers all raise again. The motorcycle motor starts BUZZING.

RYDER
Wait, where's your phone? Why aren't you filming this?

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

He tosses the canister and mag box in the loading bag, zips it up and puts his hands in the hand holes.

HOLST
Angel, what's happenin'.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

Em is relieved.

EMERALD
Okay. OJ, if you die trying to save that guy I'll kill you.

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EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

OJ gets off the horse, trying to assess what to do.

RYDER
No no no please, please don’t.

OJ
Shut your eye. Shut your eye!

RYDER (CONT'D)
Not before you take a picture.
(screams as OJ lifts him)
Take a picture first!

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Angel finishes loading... he pulls the loaded mag box out and puts it in the camera.

ANGEL
Camera reloads.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

RYDER
You can use my camera.

OJ
There’s not enough time!

OJ leans over the Ryder to lift him, but the Ryder is now looking straight up in awe.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Holst threads the film...

ANGEL
(sing-song)
It’s here.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

All the monitors go down. Em runs outside.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

The sky dancers start to fall.

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RYDER
Scorpion King, make a name for yourself.

The dark circle gets bigger as it passes through clouds. It comes very fast.

RYDER (CONT'D)
What is that?

OJ
My bad, man.

RYDER
(being picked up by the dirt devil)
Oh my god. My camera. I need my camera! What the fuuu...! AHHHH!!

OJ leaps on Lucky in the nick of time and gallops away. A dirt devil whips The Ryder directly upwards kicking and screaming. The sky dancers all lurch towards the event.

Jean Jacket darts away. The sky dancers rise.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

HOLST
Gimme the lid... *gimme the lid!*

Holst spins the cranks lurching the camera upwards only in time to get a shadow moving into the clouds.

Angel and Holst, who hadn't seen it before, are particularly stunned.

ANGEL
Oh fuck. Shit. Fuck. Hey hey... is everybody okay? For the love of fuck talk to me... please!

The walkies "wind" back on.

EMERALD
(running back inside)
OJ...!

OJ, on Lucky, keeps riding away.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

Em watches as the monitors "wind" back on.

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EMERALD
OJ! OJ! Stupid ass you better answer me. Are you okay? Are you good? Over.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

The walkie winds down. OJ keeps looking down as Jean Jacket travels over him. The Ryder screams until... CRUNCH.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. SERVICE ROAD. DAY

OJ has his head down. The cloud drifts over him.

A nearby sky dancer lays flat.

The sky dancer spins up into the cloud above. OJ stays looking down.

The sky dancer flails into the air and flies out of the twister's orbit. The battery and fan base of the sky dancer rips off in its ascent, and flies through the air CRASHING INTO A HILL in the gulch.

Jean Jacket is above OJ and glides past him. Another sky dancer goes up. The sky dancer gets to the hole in the bottom with THAT SOUND AGAIN OF TANGLED WIND. The base crashes down near the tree.

Jean Jacket leaves fast.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Holst shoots.

ANGEL
Holy shit I think it's taking the dancers...are you getting this?

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

OJ puts his reflector hood on and starts riding back.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Angel and Holst are getting the shots of his approach.

Holst is grinding his crank.

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EMERALD (O.C.)
Guys! OJ's hooded up. He's doing a run! OJ's doing a run!!

ANGEL
Oh god. Hey it's gone. I can't see it anymore guys!

OJ and Lucky run hard.

Jean Jacket hops from the "home cloud."

OJ slows down. Jean Jacket still descends fast, circling.

OJ speeds up. As Jean Jacket descends to the lowest cloud layer, the remaining sky dancers in the service road go down. Jean Jacket cloud-hops twice towards OJ who is now in the valley turning towards the house.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

Em watches as OJ turns Lucky towards Camera A.

EMERALD
Yeah! Get it. Get it!

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

OJ glances at Camera Station C.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Holst and Angel film OJ. Angel's camera losing power.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

The large circular shadow stalks OJ as he gallops east. He reaches back and releases a bundle of "grand opening" flag streamers attached to his saddle. It trails behind him long and kicks up in the wind like a kite in the middle of the valley. A small parachute made from sky dancer skin flaps open. One sky dancer eye spinning.

OJ abandons Lucky in mid-stride, tumbling safely into the shed doors.

ANGEL
GO! GO!!

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Jean Jacket BELLOWS, A SOUND WE HAVEN'T HEARD BEFORE. It shoots upwards in fear.

Holst follows it with the camera as it emits cloud-cover until it's not visible any more. The sky dancers raise.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Whoo Hoooo!! Holy shit. Yeahh!!!! Let's go!

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. SHED. DAY

OJ
Yeah, he didn't like that did he.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

Em couldn't even watch.

ANGEL (O.S.)
OJ, you're a motherfucking genius.

EMERALD
We got it. We got it... It's over, we got it y'all.

She almost laughs in relief but... SILENCE.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
The feed started going in and out when that guy got got... but we should be covered with the film camera, right Holst?

HOLST
The light... the light... It's gonna be magic soon.

Emerald is stunned silent.

OJ
What do you mean, Ant?

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Holst stands up. He grabs Dorothy.

ANGEL
Hold on, where are you going?

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HOLST
It’s gonna be alright, Angel. We don’t deserve the impossible.

Holst moves up to a higher vantage.

ANGEL
Uh hey guys, Holst just said some creepy cryptic shit, took his camera and is headed up the mountain. Over.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. DAY

OJ is by the shed.

OJ
Hey Holst.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HILLY RIDGE. DAY

EMERALD (O.S.)
Holst, wait hang on man, talk to me. Did you get the shot or didn’t you?
(to herself)
This nigga.

Holst is on a higher ridge than before and starts cranking Dorothy, pointed towards the “home cloud.”

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Angel’s got the cameras up and running.

ANGEL
Fuck it, this is crazy right.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HILLY RIDGE. DAY

Holst begins rolling.

Jean Jacket emerges slow and steady from the “home cloud.” A perfect entrance.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

Angel’s digital camera loses power. The monitor goes out. Em runs outside.

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EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. HILLY RIDGE. DAY.

Holst keeps grinding the hand crank.

Jean Jacket reappears shooting up from behind the hills and flies directly over Camera Station C.

Jean Jacket doesn't assess very long. Mostly hidden by clouds, it glides towards Holst. The massive hole is angling towards him.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. SHED. DAY

OJ, from behind the shed, watches as the whirlwind takes Holst up who cranks all the way up.

OJ
(to himself)
Nah man. Fuck.

Em, also outside now, watches in horror.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Angel is out of the tent.

ANGEL
Holst...

Angel gets knocked over by the blue tarp as Jean Jacket pulls all the contents of Camera Station C up into its hole. Debris falls around Angel, as he slides to the base of the hill all while under the tarp.

Film canisters unspool as they roll.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. DAY

Em stares. Jean Jacket starts towards her. Em runs inside.

INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. INDOOR ARENA. SECURITY ROOM. DAY

Em isn't in 5 seconds when the room explodes in a vortex of wind.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DAY

She's sent flying towards the southern foothills.

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Part of the porch is destroyed.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. BELOW CAMERA STATION C. DAY

Angel peeks out from under the tarp, sees her land across the valley.

ANGEL
Ohh fuck.

Jean Jacket is there facing him and headed back to him. Angel sees a downed sky dancer nearby. Eyes up.

Angel realizes he's looking at it.

Angel starts frantically tying the corner of the tarp around his waist with a piece of barbed wire fencing.

Angel looks out again. He starts reaching for the sky dancer.

Jean Jacket, now directly overhead, SUCKS UP the tarp over Angel.

He and the sky dancer go up.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DAY

As Em walks away towards the west, she sees Angel go up, still tangled in the barbed wire fence.

The camo tarp connected to more stuff from Camera Station C continues up into Jean Jacket and clearly disagrees with its inner wind chambers. THERE'S A HICCUP IN THE AIRFLOW causing Jean Jacket to lean to one side. It heaves a bit.

Em looks at Jean Jacket and watches in horror as it has a hard time taking off. It tries to emit vapor, but that ability too is compromised. Cloud emitting only from one side.

Jean Jacket begins to "notice her." She turns away. Jean Jacket stops everything and begins towards Em who continues west towards the motorcycle HUMMING in the valley. One more glance back only causes Jean Jacket to lock onto her more.

EMERALD
Don't look. Don't look.

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INT. HAYWOOD RANCH. VALLEY BASIN. SHED. DAY

OJ stands, hurt by his earlier fall, sees Em in the distance outside the shed.

OJ
Get the bike! Get out of here!

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. DAY

Em walks past OJ and the shed. Jean Jacket begins to unfold as it starts towards Em. It's still heaving from the tarp. Which is challenging its ability to fly and create cloud vapor.

EMERALD
Shit! Shit!

OJ limps to Lucky.

The flat long sail-like appendages catch wind as Jean Jacket continues to transform as it follows Em. Em reaches the motorcycle.

OJ
Bang!

Lucky lays down. OJ gets on painfully.

Em is now West of him moving West. He's closer to the house. Em gets on the motorcycle.

As Jean Jacket approaches, the sky dancers fall appropriately. The anti-electrical field catching up to her. She slows down in exhaustion as the motorcycle stops humming, and turns to her brother who's on Lucky.

EMERALD
No!! Just leave, OJ. Forget it, c'mon! C'MON!!

OJ looks at her. They share a moment across the valley. He point to his eyes and then to hers. "I see you"

She knows what that means. Em repeats the gesture back to OJ.

Then with peace of intention, OJ looks up at Jean Jacket. His gaze alerts it, causing it to stop pursuit of Em. It inverts turning to him instead.

OJ and Lucky walk backwards just out of the danger area, OJ stays locked with eye contact. Jean Jacket slowly approaches him and the house.

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Jean Jacket snaps into an UMBRELLIC EVENT. It uses its sail like appendages to literally ride the wind in this form.

Behind Em on the other side of the valley. A nearby downed sky dancer restarts, flailing like a madman.

OJ's pulling the anti-electrical field away from her.

Em looks over at the downed sky dancer.

OJ draws Jean Jacket towards him.

Then... the sky dancer closest to the motorcycle flutters up.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
COME ON!!!

Em looks away pointedly and takes off on the Ryder's motorcycle.

EXT. SERVICE ROAD. DAY.

Em drives off-road down the service road towards Jupiter's Claim. Jean Jacket pursues.

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. DUSK.

Em drives through Jupiter's Claim the wrong way. Past the new attraction and through the tunnel. She drives down Main Street and skids to a stop at the wishing well.

Jupe Jangle, the Jupiter's Claim gold coins, lie scattered on the ground.

She turns back. She doesn't see Jean Jacket, but hears it, that horrible wind howl.

Jean Jacket leaves the ranch and enters a cloud closer to Jupiter's Claim.

The large 25-foot balloon cartoon-rendering of Lil' Jupe in his sheriff's costume peers over the "sheriff's station" at her.

She has an idea.

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. BEHIND THE SHERIFF'S STATION. DUSK

Em unhooks metal cables tethering the balloon.

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EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. MAIN STREET. DUSK

Balloon Lil' Jupe rises.

EMERALD
This gon' fuck you up. This gon' fuck you up.

Em is exhausted and weeps. As the balloon drifts above her and the well, she begins...

Em puts a Jupe Jangle in and watches above. She cranks the hand crank of the side of the well, producing a pop, as the rotation concludes.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
Come on....

She repeats. Coin in. Crank turned. Pop. The balloon drifts upwards.

Again and again she repeats the action. Coin, Crank, Pop, Coin, crank, Pop.

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. DUSK

Angel watches Jean Jacket follow the Lil' Jupe balloon up into the clouds.

EXT. SKY. DUSK

Lil' Jupe's hat somehow bulges and droops at the same time as it breaks through the top of cloud cover, still far enough away, but facing the creature hiding inside a cloud. It's a showdown.

Then Jean Jacket, poised for an Alpha mating dance, attacks.

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. MAIN STREET. DUSK

Em repeats the process as she looks up.

EMERALD
I'm gonna take you to Oprah. I'm gonna take you to Oprah. Let's go to Oprah!

The battle happens above the clouds. Jean Jacket sails towards the balloon. There's a brief wrestle of air.

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Jean Jacket has made quick work of the balloon and jettisons straight to the “home cloud,” folding back into saucer form as it does. For a moment, the “home cloud” sits there, stationary and titanic. The rest of the clouds move left to right slow and steadily. Then... a large but distant POP.

The “home cloud” goes grey like a lightbulb gone off.

Em watches intently. After a few moments the cloud begins drifting with the rest of the clouds. Left to right... away.

EMERALD (CONT'D)
Yes!!! Yes!!!!! Nobody fucks with Haywood, bitch!!!! Nobody! Ya hear me?!

EXT. HAYWOOD RANCH. NORTHERN HILLS. DUSK

Angel sees the remains of Jean Jacket and the balloon float away in the distance.

EXT. JUPITER'S CLAIM. MAIN STREET. DUSK

Em collapses.

On her back she shuts her eyes and weeps, exhausted. She turns her head.

Four news vans sit parked in the Jupiter's Claim lot, their crews acting up in a bustle. Electricity just back up.

One out of the four cameras is already rolling. A couple other reporters are readying.

Emerald facing the encroaching fervor.... No.

Instead, she’s up and about to go back through Jupiter's Claim towards the ranch. She stops in her tracks.

Emerald swells with joy, but quickly doubts her own eyes. She shuts them and breathes deep three dreadful times.

One Mississippi. Two Mississippi. Three Mississippi.

Emerald opens her eyes with hope.

There, at the end of the main strip is OJ mounted atop Lucky. Just standing there. Waiting there for her. Legend.

The last shot Emerald took sits in the tray coming out of the winking well. It slowly develops.

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The image, the full expanded Jean Jacket glowing with the sunset and it’s perfect.

Black.

“NOPE”

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