

A Bird of the Air

Screenplay by
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Based on the novel
"THE LOOP" by
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FINAL POST PRODUCTION DRAFT

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EXT. HIGHWAY/ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Silhouetted by headlights of passing cars and his own truck headlights, LYMAN shovels widgets into a basket. He looks around as the lightbar of a police car flashes over his face, he watches it go by, removes his gloves and walks toward the headlights and light bar of his truck.

MARGIE

Upside down people. The graveyard shift, whatever you call us. We're the ones working at night while you sleep. We look out for each other, or I looked out for Lyman and he looked out for everyone else. But off the road he thought everyone else had read the big instruction manual. Lyman wasn't going to talk until he had it all figured out. Riding that highway loop night after night was the only job he'd ever had. Unless you count all the classes he took at the community college. Oh he learned lots of things just not the basics. And they aren't in books.

INT. LYMAN'S CPV - NIGHT

Camera tightens on Lyman's face as he drives, constantly checking the review mirror, the road ahead, his dials, hyper-vigilant. He drives over one hundred miles of highway, known as THE LOOP. Beside him is a large canvas bag with every gizmo for any emergency -- flares, tools, first-aid kit. The truck is a fortress of preparedness. He sees ahead... almost hallucinatory visions of ...

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Cars zip by. At the roadside Lyman picks up a kids smashed plastic tricycle, tosses it into his truck. It lands beside a broken muffler, a baseball cap, tire treads.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Establishing shot of Diner.

INT/EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Lyman sits eating alone at a table, he reads a French text book.

MARGIE (late 40's, warm) gives him the check. He's seen this women almost every night for years and years, but she still barely knows him.

Lyman nods. He gets up. As he pays his bill, he notices something new, something out of place - a small decorated cardboard box with the words 'BOOKCROSSING - CATCH & RELEASE' beside the register.

A few second-hand books are inside, with MARY by Nabokov on top.

MARGIE

You take care out there, Lyman.

LYMAN

Mmm Hmm.

MARGIE V/O

I just waited and kept him away from the greasy foods. I gave him a smile and coffee in the night. Some people talk to say something. Some when they have something to say.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING (EARLY)

The sun is rising behind a bridge over the road. Lyman's TRUCK exits off the loop.

EXT. DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS DEPOT - MORNING (EARLY)

The sun rises as Lyman pulls into a gravel yard behind a chain-link fence. It's filled with highway repair vehicles and a couple of HIGHWAY PATROL CARS. LYMAN parks his CPV, gets out and transfers his emergency kit and the CAP into the bed of his own truck. He takes his gloves off the console box and unlocks his handgun from the box. He removes "fuzzy dice" and hangs them on rear view mirror. He takes his Department of Highways ID from the visor over his head. Using a clip board he checks off items on the truck's condition, like a flight pilot.

INT. DEPOT/DISPATCH OFFICE - MORNING (EARLY)

There is a couple of HIGHWAY PATROLMEN at a table near a coffee pot, eating doughnuts.

The dispatcher TOM (late 20's, a wounded Iraq War veteran) wears an AIR FORCE Multi-National Forces Iraq baseball cap. He sits at his desk next to a goose-neck mike, lusting over the center-fold of a magazine. As NEIL (mid-30's, heavysset, dressed like Lyman) passes, his eye is caught by Tom's magazine - he comes back to look over Tom's shoulder. He can't stop himself whistling.

TOM

...160 IN 4 seconds.

NEIL

Boy, I swear I'd give my left nut to get a piece of that.

Tom doesn't disagree.

We now see it is an issue of ROAD AND TRACK. The center-fold is a *2010 Lotus Elvora*.

Lyman enters, inserts a card into a time clock crosses to Tom's desk, drops his clipboard off and leaves.

TOM

(not looking up from the magazine)

....'Morning Lyman...

Tom raises a prosthetic pincer where his hand should be.

LYMAN

Neil, you over-inflated the right front tire again.

Lyman is gone, door slams behind him. Tom reaches back with his 'hand', clamps it on the drawer and closes it.

NEIL

Say, his social skills are improving-a whole sentence.

EXT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (LATER)

LYMAN drives his truck onto his lot where an old, custom-built, aluminum AIRSTREAM MOBILE HOME, stands on concrete blocks at the rear of an empty lot in an industrial park.

Lyman parks his truck, unlocks the glove box, removes the HANDGUN. He picks up the BASEBALL CAP and a small bag of GROCERIES and walks toward the door.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

The door opens, letting light pour in. Lyman enters, places the Cap on a shelf with his collection of caps. Shelves ring the walls floor to ceiling, all very neat, with various collections of highway SIGNS - YIELD, NO U-TURN, SLIPPERY WHEN WET etc, and CAR PLATES from almost every state.

Lyman meticulously removes the ammunition clip from his GUN and locks it in his Waterloo tool cabinet.

Lyman PULLS OFF HIS JUMPSUIT and throws it into a hamper. He removes a fresh one from a closet hung with eight more orange or yellow-green jumpsuits. He places it on a hook, smooths it for the morning.

LYMAN ROLLS INTO BED. SILVER FOIL creates blackout shades for the windows. He reaches up and turns on the RADIO. His clock reads 7:49 AM.

RADIO DJ

... if you're stuck in rush hour traffic on the way to work already, or still in the shower, stick with and we'll bring the sunshine into your day. This is New Mexico's first in news, traffic and weather, KASA...

EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - DAY

FIONA (late 20's, full of energy) crosses the campus surrounded by students, greeting people, passing out flyers.

FIONA

Wanna come out Friday night? Um come visit me in the library, you never come by anymore. I miss you. Here you go, come out Friday night? Hey ladies we're reclaiming the myth of the Cowboy Friday night. Come see us. Hey guys. Wanna come out Friday night? Talking cowboys not politicians. Of course. See you there. Here you go.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Lyman, in his boxers, sits at his kitchen table over A BOWL of cereal and coffee. The trailer door is open, revealing a dry, arid, colorless landscape.

Lyman turns his gaze to the open door, blank hypnotic.

There is a sound of wings and in an instant, where before there was just a kitchen chair, there is now suddenly a very large iridescent green PARROT, perched on the back of the chair. It is undeniably magnificent.

Lyman stares, mesmerized by it's brilliance. The PARROT stares back. A long moment until Lyman can resist no longer...

LYMAN

Polly wanna ...

PARROT

SHUT UP!

They stare at each other. Lyman, taken aback, waits, tries again.

LYMAN

Polly wanna crack...

PARROT

SHUT UP! I'M AN EAGLE!

Lyman moves to the screen door and shuts it gently.

The Parrot leaps to the kitchen table, struts back and forth, stops and looks at Lyman.

Lyman sits slowly. They stare at one another. The bird spots Lyman's cereal, waddles up and peers into it. He takes a bit of cereal, tosses it onto the table, shakes his head and stares at Lyman.

Lyman rises, moves to the refrigerator, opens it and bends to see what's there. There is a sudden rush of wings over head. Lyman yells, covering his head. The Parrot screams mid-flight...

PARROT (CONT'D)

PREPARE TO MEET YOUR MAKER.

And lands on a shelf in the refrigerator. Lyman reflexively slams the door closed.

Lyman gingerly opens the door. The Parrot is standing on the shelf, rooting around for something to eat, feathers puffed up.

PARROT (CONT'D)

Give some to the Parrot.

The parrot finds a plum and makes stabs at it with his foot. Lyman picks up the plum carefully and takes it back to the table. The parrot follows him across the kitchen floor and hops from the chair to the table and begins to eat.

Lyman reaches for his cell phone on the table, frames the bird and snaps a picture. Startled, the bird shrieks.

LYMAN

Sorry.

Lyman reaches his hand out to the bird. The parrot bites his finger.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

You bit me.

PARROT

SHUT UP.

The parrot hops onto the back of the chair.

Lyman wraps his bleeding finger in a napkin then grabs a notepad and writes.

ANGLE ON THE NOTEPAD

It's logo reads: DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS.

In a large neat hand Lyman writes "Shut-up, I'm an eagle and Give some to the parrot."

The bird cocks his head at Lyman and takes a large dump on the chair.

LYMAN

That won't do.

Lyman stands and closes the window shades to quiet the bird. He walks backward to his bedroom eyeing the bird.

INT. PET SHOP - DAY

C.U. on FLOYD'S eye staring up adoringly at FIONA. She is chatting with AMBER, a YOUNG WOMAN, who's ringing her up. AMBER tosses a dog biscuit into the waiting jaws of FLOYD. Fiona holds up a fancy dog collar, leans on the counter and lowering her voice...

AMBER

How's Floyd today?

FIONA

Pleased as a puppy with two tails.
Shhhh... it's his birthday next week...
What do you think? Is it too?

AMBER

Perfect. Is that it, Fiona?

FIONA

Yep. Let's go Sugar. Thanks, Amber.

We watch her coax Floyd up and out the door.

Lyman eases up to the counter with a bird cage, parrot food and vitamins.

AMBER

You look like a first-timer. Did you just get a bird?

LYMAN

No. I... found him... a parrot... found me. Do you have a...

Lyman winces at the sound of his own voice.

AMBER

If the bird's lost you can fill out a form, it will go on our website and on our lost and found board for two weeks.

Lyman has been absentmindedly looking at the book on the counter. Zane Grey's CODE OF THE WEST.

AMBER (CONT'D)

Hey congratulations, you've been Bookcrossed.

Lyman just stares at AMBER who reaches over, opens the cover displaying a label in the shape of a sun pasted inside. She reads it aloud.

AMBER (CONT'D)

"I'M FREE and you've been CAUGHT. I'm traveling around the world. So, keep my dream alive -- READ AND RELEASE me!"

LYMAN

- right. OK. Can I just get the form... I have a sort of bird emergency.

AMBER gives him the credit card slip and places the book in with the parrot food. She gives him the form and points...

AMBER

Third aisle in the back.

But instead, Lyman turns and goes out the revolving door of the store as FIONA breezes back in.

AMBER (CONT'D)

What'd you forget this time...

FIONA

- Floyd's eye drops. Hey... so... that guy...

AMBER

Yeah, cute. He found a parrot... and he took one of your books.

FIONA

He speaks? Okay he's a student at the college. Every time I try to talk to him he just nods and walk away. And then I catch him staring at me. I figure he's either very shy or very gay.

AMBER

- or very married.

That gets Fiona's attention.

AMBER (CONT'D)

Well, no gay man is going to walk around in that jumpsuit. You need to get his attention.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

LYMAN enters with the cage and food. Prodigious amounts of bird poop pepper the trailer. The Parrot is awakened by the slamming of the screen door. Lyman puts the cage on the kitchen table, fills the seed cup and places it in the cage.

LYMAN

Nice work.

The bird finds his own way into the cage.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

Home sweet home.

PARROT

Brrring MA 17. Brrring MA 17.

EXT. LYMAN'S CPV/HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Lyman is standing on the shoulder of the loop behind an abandoned car. He is leaning against the door of the CPV his mike in his hand.

LYMAN

140, this is 190. Send a tow truck to 599 and Blue Canyon Way. An abandoned car, plate number Charlie O 1 354...

The throb of an engine is heard from above.

TOM (O.S.)

Roger 190.

Lyman looks up to see a classic Red Mustang. It speeds by him and guns down the ramp at high speed.

Lyman watches as the Mustang's tail-lights disappear.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

An older model car is pulled off of the road, steam rising from under the hood, a white handkerchief tied to the antenna. FIONA sits behind the wheel bent over her purse. FLOYD is asleep in the back seat. HEADLIGHTS appear behind her and come to a halt.

CAR'S REARVIEW MIRROR

FIONA stares into the glare of lights in her rear view mirror. She swivels around to find LYMAN dressed in an orange jumpsuit, the kind prisoners in your nightmares wear.

Fiona rolls her window down, smiles her best smile.

FIONA

Howdy. Thanks for stopping...

She tries to hand Lyman a book, Flaubert's A SIMPLE HEART.

LYMAN

I don't understand.

FIONA

It's a thank you for stopping. I'm a librarian.

LYMAN

Ma'am, just pop your hood please.

FIONA

Hood?

(She begins pressing buttons-
interior lights, radio, the
gas door opens, the hazard
lights flash, trunk pops
open.)

Nope.

LYMAN reaches into the car and finds the hood release. As he returns to his truck, we see Fiona checking him out in her side-view mirror. Lyman slides on his gloves and returns with a water can and tool bag.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Oh. (Petting Floyd) It's going to be fine.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT (CONT'D)

FIONA POV AS LYMAN LOOKING GRIM SHUTS THE HOOD.

LYMAN returns to the window, 18-wheelers whoosh close by, as traffic picks up we hear snatches of conversation.

LYMAN

I put some water in. Your fan belt is frayed. Get off at the next exit, there is a service station there.

FIONA

Thank you so much.

LYMAN

Don't wait.

FIONA

You look really familiar. Haven't I seen you ...

But LYMAN has already started towards his truck. He kicks the flares off the road. Fiona watches as LYMAN climbs into his CPV truck, U-turns and drives off across the grass divider. FIONA waves at LYMAN as he drives away.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Establishing shot of gas station.

INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

FIONA places a small decorated cardboard box with the words BOOKCROSSING - CATCH and RELEASE on the bathroom sink. She pulls a book out of her purse, ZEN AND THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE, places it in the box, regards it and exits the MEN'S ROOM.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

French Class. Lyman exists the classroom as his teacher PROFESSOR PAQUET watches him.

EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Lyman slips a 'FOUND - PARROT' flyer from his bag, and tapes it to a wall.

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE/LIBRARY - DAY (AFTERNOON) (CONT'D)

Lyman pins another of his flyers to a notice board. FIONA (she works here) walks up behind him.

She pins one of her own event flyers beside his.

FIONA

You want to come to my Special Cowboy
Poetry and Songs Event on Friday night?

Lyman is totally taken aback, totally blind-sided. Fiona looks him in the eye.

FIONA (CONT'D)

You know, underneath this skirt my legs
are almost miraculously transformed into
my ass.

(beat)

To everyone else it's obvious.

She walks across the library. Being a guy he can't help but check out Fiona's figure. She turns in time to discover his gaze. Lyman tries to cover...

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE/LIBRARY/RETURNS COUNTER - DAY

Fiona's filing index cards. Lyman walks up. Her back is to him. He's really uncomfortable.

FIONA

Please, Lyman, if you're going to stare, at least have the courtesy to introduce yourself.

LYMAN

I was standing there and you... said that thing... how'd you know my name?

She steps to the counter. A red plastic name tag pinned to her blouse reads '*Bona Fide Bookworm*'. She points at his pec where his name is stitched on his jumpsuit.

FIONA

- 'cause it's written right there on your fetching jumpsuit, Mr. Goodwrench.

She flashes a big smile.

FIONA (CONT'D)

You know the first time I saw you I decided to be forward. I mean I was already forward before I decided to be forward so it wasn't that much of a leap for me.

Lyman can't figure her out.

FIONA (CONT'D)

But I thought it would put you at ease.

LYMAN

It's unusual behavior for a librarian.

FIONA

Thank you.

(beat)

I'm Fiona James.

She extends a hand and smiles her disarming smile again.

FIONA (CONT'D)

What's your story?

LYMAN

I don't have one.

FIONA

Of course you do, everyone does. Me - I specialize in cowboy literature. I'm the Interim Director of the Eugene Manlove Rhodes Collection.

LYMAN

You're temporary?

FIONA

Yeah, it's what I do. I do my work, I move on. I've lived all over the past eight years.

She waits, expecting Lyman to pick up the conversational ball. Nothing. Her verbal effusiveness reaches new heights.

FIONA (CONT'D)

I like conversation. I think it's as good as sex. If you're a talker I'm a listener.

Still nothing from Lyman.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Are we going for a coffee?

LYMAN

I had some already.

FIONA

Live on the edge. Have another.

LYMAN

I have to go to work.

Fiona smiles. She picks up a book.

FIONA

OK. Well, I'm sure if you need any help you'll let me know.

Fiona goes back to her work.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - NIGHT (EVENING)

LYMAN

I should have asked her about books or cowboys... something.

The bird delicately takes the seed from Lyman and cracks the shell. He mocks his own words from earlier.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

'Nope, not me, I don't have a story'.

PARROT

Speak for yourself.

It's an eerie moment. An inadvertent interaction or...?

The Parrot reaches a claw through the bars and slips the CATCH on the cage, then pushes the CAGE DOOR open with his beak. He hops from the cage threshold to the back of the kitchen chair.

PARROT (CONT'D)

Brrrrring... M A 17... Speak for yourself.

Lyman places the parrot back in the cage. Checks the latch. The parrot stares at him then...

PARROT (CONT'D)

'A bird of the air shall carry the word'.

Lyman can't help but feel the parrot might actually be communicating with him. He looks at the parrot.

LYMAN

Who made you?

PARROT

Carry the word.

INT/EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Lyman is drinking coffee, looking at his list of Parrot quotes. He's baffled. And now obsessed.

Lyman pays his bill, he notices the small decorated cardboard box with the words 'BOOKCROSSING - CATCH & RELEASE' beside the register.

MARGIE

Okay, see you on your break then. Stay safe out there.

LYMAN

Mmm Hmm.

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE/LIBRARY - DAY

He is pulling books from a shelf and piling them up in his arms as he walks, then dropping them onto a table. Fiona is suddenly beside him, holding a large picture book with an exotic parrot on the cover. She pulls some books as well.

FIONA

I heard you got a bird. Does it talk?
Are you keeping it ?

LYMAN

(whispering)

No.

FIONA

No it doesn't talk, or no you're not
keeping it...

LYMAN

No, I'm not keeping it.

FIONA

Then why did you buy a cage at the pet
store?

LYMAN

Don't you have something to do?

FIONA

Yes. I'm helping you.

LYMAN

I don't need any help.

FIONA

You don't want any help. But I'm very
good with pets I'll help.

LYMAN

It's not a pet.

FIONA

(loudly)

It's not a pet??

LYMAN

You're a librarian for god's sake. Can't
you whisper?

FIONA

(whispering)

When I talk like this people don't
listen.

LYMAN

Okay I found a parrot. I'm trying to find
out about it so I can return it to it's
owner.

She pulls up a chair at the table with him, dumps her books and smiles at him as if to show him how. It's enough to lull Lyman into a state of semi-resignation.

FIONA

Okay, so, what does it look like?

Lyman is staring hypnotized by...

CLOSE UP - FIONA'S MOUTH

LYMAN

It's uh... pink...

FIONA

Pink? The parrot is pink?

LYMAN

Uh. No, it's green. More green than pink, with a yellow patch on it's head.

FIONA

What's his name?

LYMAN

How would I know?

FIONA

Well, ask him.

LYMAN

Wait that's him.

(reading)

Yellow-naped Amazon? All the way from South America...

FIONA

...look here - 'a fine talker, gentle and clever.' Has he said anything yet?

Lyman looks at Fiona. He slowly pulls out his spiral notebook and lays it on the desk. He opens it. Fiona slides it over to where she can read it.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Wow. Really?

LYMAN

Yeah, sometimes he sounds like a little girl, then he sounds like a wise old preacher.

FIONA

What's 'bring bring'?

LYMAN

More like 'brrrrinnng', the way a telephone rings.

Fiona stares intently at the list.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

I think that M A 17 might mean something.

FIONA

Are you sure he didn't say 'I'm seventeen'?

LYMAN

No, it was a capital M capital A then the number 17.

FIONA

How do you know it's a capital A and not a little 'a', hmm? Maybe that's his name.

LYMAN

Why would anyone name a bird M A 17?

FIONA

Maybe...he's a secret agent.

She bursts out laughing, stamping the floor under the desk. Heads turn.

Lyman gives her a look, stands up and begins stacking books. She stands as well and watches him exit.

EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE/LIBRARY/QUAD - DAY

Lyman exits, Fiona on his heels.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Wait! I was kidding! I can help you! I'd like to meet him.

LYMAN

You can't - I work nights.

FIONA

Wow, our schedules are so opposite. OK, I'll come to work with you. I get off at 9. Then afterwards I can meet the parrot.

LYMAN

You can't come. It's dangerous.

FIONA

How?

LYMAN

You're out in the middle of nowhere...
you never know who's out there. Robbers,
axe murderers...

Fiona looks skeptical.

FIONA

Murderers still use axes? Lyman wait.
Lyman...

Lyman passes through to the entrance of a classroom
building.

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE/CLASSROOM HALLWAY - DAY

Lyman heads down the hall congested with students, Fiona
catches up.

FIONA

I'll sit on the far side of the truck. I
just think it would be cool driving
around at night, helping stranded people.

He shakes his head. They're face to face.

FIONA (CONT'D)

What are you afraid of?

LYMAN

I've never been afraid of anything.

Lyman jerks his head up to see if anyone has heard him.

FIONA

That's a fat one. You're scared to death
of me. And I'm just a girl who likes you.

LYMAN

Where does that come from? You don't even
know me.

Before he knows it, she impulsively plucks his cell phone
out of his jumpsuit hip holster and begins to dial.

FIONA

I'll help you with your parrot search.

Now Fiona's cell phone rings.

FIONA (CONT'D)

The last thing the parrot said - the
'*bird of the air*' thing? I think I know
where it's from.

She checks her phone.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Oh look who's got my number... and now
I've got yours.

She takes a quick snapshot of herself and hands it back to
him.

LYMAN

I have to put an ad in the paper...go to
class....And I lied...I'm afraid of
tornadoes...

Lyman turns and leaves. Fiona watches him go.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

French Class. Lyman is looking at his list of Parrot
sayings, not paying attention to the teacher.

PROFESSOR PAQUET (O.S.)

Comment dit on "Il faut faire attention"
au conditionnel? Lyman? Qu'est-ce que vous
en pensez?

Lyman looks up, caught off guard. He closes his note book.

LYMAN

Scusi, cosa?...I mean...Pourriez vous
répéter la question, s'il vous plaît?

PROFESSOR PAQUET

Non.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Lyman sits with his portable CB on the table. MARGIE is
taking his order.

LYMAN

Thanks.

MARGIE

I'll put your order right in.

She starts away.

LYMAN

How are you? Margie. Tonight.

She stops, turns slowly to Lyman.

MARGIE

Why Lyman, is that you starting a conversation? I'm very well. My feet hurt. But thank you for asking. How are you?

LYMAN

I feel...fine. Hungry I guess...I found a parrot.

MARGIE

Hmm.

INT. DINER - NIGHT (LATER)

Lyman's plate of chicken fried steak sits in front of him, untouched. Margie is looking at the parrot picture on his cell and holds a flyer.

LYMAN

You really think so?

MARGIE

Yeah. I think it means '*give some of what you have to the people with nothing*'. It's good advice, nobody ever went wrong with that. About the other things he said...

Lyman's CB CRACKLES to life.

MARGIE (CONT'D)

You eat.

TOM (O.S.)

Lyman, you still at Margie's?

Margie lifts the CB, clicks the switch.

MARGIE

Sure is.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS DEPOT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

TOM

We've got a jack-knifed rig flipped at the Eldorado turnoff. Ambulance is stuck downtown.

INT. DINER - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Lyman is already up and putting on his fluorescent vest.

MARGIE

Copy that Tom, I'll put his dinner in the warmer.

INT/EXT. CAB OF A JACK-KNIFED BIG RIG/HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A TRUCKER is trapped driver side down, wedged between the dash and the steering wheel.

Lyman arrives, pokes his head through the side window.

LYMAN

Hey, how you doing?

The Trucker is almost embarrassed to be in pain.

TRUCKER

Scorched my crotch with my damn coffee. I think my leg's broke.

Lyman crawls through the window of the rig until he's hanging half upside down. Lyman opens his First-Aid kit.

LYMAN

EMT's are on the way.

Lyman's cell phone rings. He reaches for it but it slips out of his hand and into the lap of the Trucker, who picks it up. Fiona's picture is on screen. He shows it to Lyman.

TRUCKER

That your girlfriend?

LYMAN

She's not my girlfriend.

TRUCKER

Hello?

LYMAN

Oh jeez. Tell her I'm working.

Lyman checks the truckers eyes for shock with his flashlight.

FIONA

Lyman?

TRUCKER

(answering the phone)

Ma'am, he's kinda busy right now... he'll have to call you right... okay... yeah, hold on... she says it's about the bird.

FIONA

He's gonna wanna hear this. Tell him it's about the bird?

TRUCKER

It's about the bird.

LYMAN

Hang up.

FIONA

I was right that thing the bird said it's from the bible.

TRUCKER

(listening)

Uh huh... uh huh... really?

(to Lyman)

She says the thing he said, it's from the Bible.

The Trucker winces with the pain.

LYMAN

Just hang up, Man!

FIONA

It's kind of mystical and spiritual...

TRUCKER

Uh huh... uh huh... no kidding...

FIONA

I don't know I think it's one very special bird.

TRUCKER

Ma'm, you tell that bird to pray for me, will ya?

FIONA

I don't really know what it means but I think it's important. Lyman?

LYMAN

For Pete's sake.

The Trucker hangs up the phone and rolls his eyes back in pain.

INT. FIONA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Fiona's at her kitchen table holding her phone to her ear.

FIONA

Lyman? Lyman?

She hangs up. Immediately, it RINGS again.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Lyman, why would that man want the bird...

WOMAN'S VOICE

Lyman? Who's Lyman?

FIONA

(whispering)

Oh, it's no one Mom... uh... what's up?

MOM (V.O.)

I know it's someone special when you whisper, Fiona Christina.

FIONA

(whispering)

I'm a librarian. I whisper.

MOM (V.O.)

No you don't. Fiona, remember our little talk, no one unavailable this time. Where do you find them?...

FIONA

Mom, I'm almost 30, you can stop raising me now y'know?

FADE OUT

EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - DAY

Lyman gets out of his truck.

FIONA (O.S.)

Hey there.

Fiona approaches, holding up a small pocket Bible.

FIONA (CONT'D)

It's from Ecclesiastes, The Old Testament - after the '*nothing new under the sun*' and '*the everything has a season*' bit. Look '*Curse not the king, curse not the rich. For a bird of the air shall carry the word and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.*' Weird huh?

LYMAN

'*That which hath wings shall tell the matter*'. What does that mean?

FIONA

Well, it's about this Preacher guy who decides that all is vanity, and since life is so short we should eat, drink, be merry and enjoy God's gifts.

Lyman tries to fold down the corner of the page. Fiona lightly slaps his hand.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Lyman! Show some respect. That's what book marks are for.

(beat)

Lyman... Lyman. Is that your first name or your last name?

LYMAN

Last.

FIONA

So what's your first name?

LYMAN

Don't have one.

FIONA

Everybody has a first name. Come on, you can tell me, I won't laugh. I promise.

LYMAN

They don't have first and last names in the Bible. Jesus of Nazareth...

FIONA

Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm... Lyman of the Highway.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Lyman surveys the surrounding areas as he gets down to the work of picking up tail light pieces from a recent accident. Moments later, as if he feels unseen eyes, he freezes and turns slowly to find the Mustang stopped under a street lamp. The lights pop on, the engine churns, revs, but doesn't take off.

The Mustang slowly pulls opposite Lyman, as if daring him to chase, then explodes in screaming rubber and fishtails off into the dark night, leaving Lyman furiously glaring at the distant tail lights.

LYMAN

140 this is 190. Tell the Troopers to watch out for a red mustang going north towards Decatur road. Driving like he wants to kill himself.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Lyman is reading. His cell rings - he can see it's Fiona calling. He doesn't answer.

FRANK (O.C.)

I'm so hungry my stomach thinks my throat's been cut.

FRANK (50's, a classic Highway Patrol officer) throws his hat on Lyman's table, sits opposite. Margie arrives with a coffee pot, lifts Lyman's menu.

MARGIE

Evening, Frank.
(to Lyman)
- the usual, darlin'?

LYMAN

-thanks, Margie.

Margie sets the menu in front of Frank and leaves.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

You know anything about a '67 Red Mustang, muscle car? Seen it around?

FRANK

A 427 cubic inch 390 horse engine? No, haven't seen it, but I'd sure love to though. By the way, Fiona says to please call her. She ran outta gas on 599 tonight. Nice girl. My she sure can talk.

Margie arrives to take Frank's order.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I met Lyman's girl.

LYMAN

She's not my girl.

FRANK

Not what she says.

MARGIE

You keeping secrets, Lyman?

Lyman does not look up from the book.

LYMAN

Gotta go.

FRANK

My ears are still bleeding.

EXT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (MORNING)

LYMAN turns his truck into his driveway to find FIONA'S car next to his trailer. She is peering into a window. Lyman parks, gets out.

FIONA

Surprise!

LYMAN

I don't like surprises.

FIONA

Course you do - everybody likes surprises.

LYMAN

Nope. Not me.

FIONA

Well, I was worried about you.

LYMAN

How did you know where I live?

FIONA

It's in the Campus Directory.

LYMAN

It's not an open invitation.

FIONA

You didn't return my phone calls, so I came over. You'd thank me if you were dead in the bathtub.

Lyman has reached his door, hands full as always.

LYMAN

I don't even have a bathtub.

FIONA

Why didn't you tell me you lived in a place like this?

LYMAN

I've never told you lots of things.

FIONA

Man, if I lived in a place like this it would be the first thing I'd tell. Do you ever go anywhere in it?

LYMAN

It's my house. I don't go places in it. I come home to it.

Lyman's phone rings back in the cab of his truck. Lyman sets down the bags, turns and goes to run to the cab. Fiona starts toward the truck.

FIONA

I'll get it.

LYMAN

No it's okay, let me...

Before Lyman can reach the truck, he's caught from behind and falls face first into the dirt.

Lyman looks back to his feet and there's FLOYD looking up apologetically between huge brown ears. Lyman's cuff is firmly gripped in his muzzle.

FIONA

He's very protective. No Floyd.

LYMAN

Jeez.

The PHONE KEEPS RINGING. Floyd digs in, tugging him, shifting his weight back and forth.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

Let go! I wasn't attacking you! The phones ringing!

(to Floyd)

Let go, you stupid dog.

FIONA

He is far from stupid. Floyd. No.

LYMAN

How much do you weigh?

Lyman's CELL RINGS AGAIN. Fiona opens the door, grabs it and answers. Her eye falls on Lyman's Courtesy Patrol ID, she picks it up - under the photo, the letters DOB, but there is no day or month just 1975/76 it can't help but catch her eye.

FIONA

Hello, Mr. Lyman's assistant speaking...

Fiona hits speakerphone so the prostrate Lyman can hear.

ELEANOR (O.S.)

I'm calling about the lost parrot.

FIONA

'79/'80?

ELEANOR (O.S.)

'Scuse me.

FIONA

Sorry.

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Do you have my bird?

FIONA

Could you describe your bird for me?

ELEANOR (O.S.)

He's green with a spot of yellow on the back of his head.

Lyman whispers to Fiona.

LYMAN

Every parrot's green. Let go!

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Hello?

FIONA

Does your bird say anything special?

ELEANOR (O.S.)

He says, 'Speak for yourself' and 'Shut up.' And sometimes 'Prepare to meet your maker'.

(beat)

Do you have my bird?

Lyman nods. Fiona covers the mouthpiece.

FIONA

I guess breakfast's gonna have to wait.

INT/EXT. LYMAN'S TRUCK/NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The Parrot is in its too-small cage, surrounded by bubble wrap, strapped in between Lyman and Fiona. Floyd's in the back seat. Each holds the cage with a hand. They are stopped at a light.

FIONA

Why do we have to have the heat on? It's gotta be 100 degrees in here.

She starts to open the window.

LYMAN

Don't! Parrots are very susceptible to drafts.

FIONA

You trying to get me to take my top off?

Lyman ignores it, instead looking over Fiona's shoulder as she scans the lost and found columns in the local newspaper.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Yes! I just love when the losts match up with the founds. It feels so right. I don't know what I'd do if I ever lost Floyd.

EXT. ELEANOR REEVES'S HOME - DAY

Lyman's holding the bird cage on the front porch. He knocks the door, and a dog starts barking. Fiona is beside him, fanning herself.

FIONA

Are you sure you want to do this?

Lyman glares at her, and she stops. We hear footsteps approach, then the door is opened by ELEANOR REEVES (40's), holding a cocktail.

She screams "Shut up" savagely back at the dog, her eyes fixed on the bird crouching in his cramped cage.

ELEANOR

Yeah, that's him. Bring him on in.

INT. ELEANOR REEVE'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

A toy poodle hides beneath a recliner. Lyman and Fiona are sitting across the kitchen table. An empty bird cage stands in the corner.

ELEANOR

Thank you for bringing him back. Have a seat. You can put him right there. He's trouble is all he is.

LYMAN

I brought his things, toys and...

He sets a bag of food and toys on the table.

ELEANOR

I never offered no reward.

LYMAN

No, it's okay, I didn't expect anything. I'm just happy he's...

The bird cuts him off with a 'shut up'.

ELEANOR

SHUT UP!

(stopping her ears)

Jeez, I forgot how awful he is.

LYMAN

I was wondering, why did you teach him the things he says?

Lyman stares at her.

ELEANOR

Honey, I've had him for eight years and the only thing he's learned in this house is 'shut up'. Between that dog and this bird I'm like to lose my mind.

FIONA

Then why did you answer the ad?

ELEANOR

He's worth a fortune. People will pay seven or eight hundred bucks for a talking bird.

LYMAN

I'll give you a thousand dollars for him.

Eleanor regards Lyman cagily. This man wants this bird.

ELEANOR

I'm not selling him now - he keeps the dog company.

FIONA

We'll take the dog, too.

Lyman looks to Fiona - he's not keen on that idea.

ELEANOR

Dog's not for sale. But okay, you got me, I'll take two thousand for the bird.

FIONA

Two thousand! Are you kidding me?

ELEANOR

No.

Lyman pulls out a check, begins filling it in.

FIONA

What are you doing?

Lyman ignores her.

FIONA (CONT'D)

You write that check for a penny more than eight hundred and I will divorce you on the spot.

LYMAN

Fiona will you wait outside? Please?

FIONA

I mean it. Don't push me. I will take the kids to Mom's.

(beat)

You'd better have a good attorney.

ELEANOR

All right, all right, 900.

FIONA

Mmm Hmm.

ELEANOR

OK, 800.

LYMAN

Ma'am, can I ask you where you got the bird from?

ELEANOR

Murray's Retirement home - they gave me the bird for free.

Lyman and Fiona leave with the parrot cage.

Eleanor to the dog who runs after Lyman and Fiona

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

EXT. RURAL ROAD/INT. LYMAN'S TRUCK - DAY

In the distance Lyman's truck cuts across the landscape, spewing up road dust as it slips along a rural road.

FIONA

Congratulations, you own a parrot. Were you actually going to pay that woman two thousand dollars? Are you one of those secret lottery millionaires who lives in a trailer?

LYMAN

I don't gamble.

FIONA

Why does that not surprise me?

LYMAN

I need to find the real owner. The wise man that taught him what to say. It's not random. It's no joke.

EXT. MURRAY'S RETIREMENT CENTER/PORCH & GARDEN - DAY

In the rear garden, TWO ELDERLY WOMEN are sitting in wheelchairs.

On the rear porch, MRS. BLAIR (50's, a jovial woman) is holding Lyman's cell phone with the picture of the parrot on it. FIONA and LYMAN are opposite her.

MRS. BLAIR

Oh. Yes, that looks like Shelton all right. One of the lucky ones who got out of here alive.

LYMAN

Shelton...?

MRS. BLAIR

He was Ruby Ballard's bird. She died 12 or 13 years back. The family left him to the center. We kept him in the lobby for a couple years. Until his mouth got him kicked out.

FIONA

'Prepare to meet your Maker?'

MRS. BLAIR

Yeah. Not what our residents want to hear over their morning oatmeal.

MRS. BLAIR pulls a magazine away from one of the residents.

FIONA

I can imagine.

Fiona stands abruptly and hands her card to Mrs Blair.

FIONA (CONT'D)

It's been a real pleasure, Mrs. Blair. If you would be so kind as to e-mail me your records on Mrs. Ballard's family.

MRS. BLAIR

Certainly, I'd be glad to. I'm sure that the inheritance you spoke of will be a welcome surprise.

Fiona hands Mrs. Blair her card

FIONA

Here you go.

Mrs. Blair reads Fiona's card.

MRS. BLAIR

It says you work in a library.

Fiona doesn't miss a beat.

FIONA

Oh that's a cover, Mrs. Blair. In our line of work, we can't be too careful. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

MRS. BLAIR

Your welcome.

LYMAN

Inheritance?

INT. LYMAN'S CPV - NIGHT

Camera tightens on Lyman's face as he drives, constantly checking the review mirror, the road ahead, his dials, hyper-vigilant. He drives over one hundred miles of highway, known as THE LOOP.

MARGIE V/O

The parrot brought up a lot of questions for Lyman but those only created more questions. He kept rolling Ecclesiastes over and over in his head. 'The race is not to the swift. Nor the battle to the strong. Nor yet riches to men of understanding. But time and chance happen to them all. Wasn't that what he saw every night? Didn't it prove? Prove what?

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

The table has been moved. Copper tubing and wires are stacked on the floor next to a 4 x 4 square marked off in the corner.

Lyman is putting the finishing touches on a large cage. The Parrot watches from his small cage. Lyman picks up one of his highway YIELD signs and screws it into place.

FIONA (O.S.)

Anybody home?

She enters holding a gift.

FIONA (CONT'D)

I brought a cage-warming present.

Fiona stares at the parrot. The parrot stares back.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Hello there. Polly want a...

PARROT

Shut up. I'm an eagle.

FIONA

Wow. He actually said it. How come his lips don't move when he talks?

LYMAN

Only when he reads.

Fiona starts to look around at the found objects collected around Lyman's trailer - road signs, license plates.

Lyman just keeps working. At that moment, the parrot shrills a piercing but clear wolf whistle.

FIONA

Why thank you. Does he whistle much?

LYMAN

It's the first time.

She smiles at the Parrot, then turns her attention to Lyman.

PARROT

Speak for yourself.

Fiona looks around at all the shelves full of the detritus that Lyman collects.

Inside the cage, Lyman hangs a perch and a large ring onto a hook on the ceiling. The new cage is finished.

Fiona spots a book tucked away on a shelf and pulls it down. It's her Zane Grey's CODE OF THE WEST.

FIONA

Lyman, don't forget -- read and release.

Lyman takes it out of her hands.

LYMAN

When I'm finish, I'll release it back into the wild.

She keeps snooping about.

FIONA

Where'd you get all this stuff? It's like living on an intersection.

LYMAN

People lose things, I pick them up.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Her gaze is held by a sizable trophy collection. She looks back at Lyman, smiling, waiting for an explanation.

LYMAN

What?

She is uncharacteristically silent, forcing him to speak.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

What? I collect them.

FIONA

You collect other people's trophies?

LYMAN

I buy them... at garage sales and flea markets.

Fiona squints at the trophies, then at Lyman.

FIONA

You're flawed ...

Both are silent. Lyman's eyes go to his bedroom through the open door. Fiona stands, motionless, as if she's reading Lyman's mind, waiting for him to make a move.

Lyman heads back to the kitchen. He stops at the kitchen door, turns.

LYMAN

People collect all kinds of things. Shows that you can accomplish something.

FIONA

Well, they obviously don't mean very much to the people that won them.

Lyman opens the small cage, offers his bare hand to the PARROT who steps gently onto it. Lyman opens the door to the new cage and sets the Parrot on the new perch.

Lyman shuts the large door and slides a bar through the hasp.

LYMAN

OK Houdini, let's see you get outta that.

The Parrot turns slowly and stares at Lyman.

She scans the shelves again, realizes something is odd.

FIONA

Hey, how come you don't have any photos around?

LYMAN

I don't take photos.

FIONA

What about your family? Do you have any brothers or sisters?

LYMAN

No.

FIONA

What about your folks?

LYMAN

Why are you asking me all this?

FIONA

I just asked about your parents. Why is everything such a big deal secret with you?

LYMAN

It's not a big deal secret. I was found by the side of the road when I was four.

FIONA

What?!

LYMAN

Well, at least that's what they told me in all the Foster homes.

FIONA

You're an orphan?

LYMAN

Jeez, I'm not an orphan anymore. I'm a grown man.

FIONA

You don't have anybody?

LYMAN

Just me. What's wrong?.

Fiona begins to cry, her shoulders shaking. She buries her face in his chest. Lyman tries to comfort her. He speaks into her hair.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

It's just normal for me. I can't miss something I never had.

FIONA

I just... I don't know what I would do if I didn't have a family that was always ready for me come home. I have to go.

LYMAN

Hey, I'm the orphan and I'm not crying.

Lyman hands her a handkerchief. She tries her best to stop crying.

FIONA

I have to go.

As she makes a quick exit the parrot sounds off another wolf whistle.

EXT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Lyman comes to the door, stands on his steps watching Fiona get in the car. As soon as she starts her engine, his finely tuned ear notices something wrong. He steps down into the yard.

LYMAN

Sounds like you got a loose rod... Fiona. You need to get someone to look...

Fiona doesn't hear him. She pulls out.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

He reenters his kitchen, walks over to the bird.

LYMAN

What?

THE PARROT

Stay tuned.

LYMAN

Could you be more specific?

THE PARROT

A bird of the air shall carry the word.

INT. PET SHOP - DAY

AMBER is bathing Floyd. FIONA helps.

AMBER

Your serious? He has no family at all?
Are you sure he just doesn't want you to
meet them? How much do you know about
him? Anything?

FIONA

No, but it's not like that. He works for
the highway department, that's nearly
like the police. Amber. Don't give me
that look.

AMBER

Conditioner.

FIONA

He's just socially challenged. 'Course he
has a strange birth date on his license
and he does talk about axe murderers.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

Lyman is eating a bowl of granola next to the cage,
reading a book.

THE PARROT (O.S.)

Give some to the parrot.

Lyman walks toward the cage with a piece of cereal in one
hand while holding The Code of the West in the other. The
bird takes a piece of cereal in his beak, cracks and
swallows it.

THE PARROT (CONT'D)

Mmmmmmmmm, good.

Lyman writes in his notebook.

Beside 'Mmmmm good,' Lyman writes 'A response to satisfying hunger. Gratitude expressed.' Now he's struck by another possibility.

LYMAN

Campbell's commercial?

THE PARROT

Stay tuned.

Lyman and the bird look directly into each others eyes.

Lyman experiments with the bird's name.

LYMAN

Shelton? Shelly? Tim? Calvin? Grace?
Walter?

The Parrot doesn't register anything.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY/MICROFICHE ROOM - DAY

Fiona looks through a drawer of Microfiche.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

Joe? Henry? Billy?

Fiona sits at a computer scanning back issues of the VALENCIA COUNTY NEWS BULLETIN newspaper. Police reports, and copies of census papers and phone records are beside her.

Fiona types "Car Accident... February 1980... Sandoval County.. into the SEARCH BOX. An article appears. Fiona reads:

MIRACLE BOY SURVIVES ACCIDENT

On a ruled stretch of highway, North of Rio Rancho, a 1972 Ford Mustang veered from the highway, at a high rate of speed and struck a lone tree, **claiming the lives of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Lyman. Their 4 year old boy was miraculously thrown clear and survived** with minor cuts and abrasions. An eye witness said it appeared the driver lost control of the car to avoid a coyote, then struck the tree. "When we found the child, he was **unable to speak**, I think he was in shock," said Carlynn de Shields, an eyewitness. Anyone having any information as to the boy's next of kin is requested to call the Department of Family Protection Services or County Police.

Reached for comment, child psychologist Dr. Teresa Tokamaru said that "it is not unusual in these cases of **extreme trauma for a child** to become **electively mute**. Sometimes it resolves shortly after the trauma. Sometimes it takes years.

One FADED PHOTO of a grim accident scene of a CAR SMASHED INTO a FORKED, MIS-SHAPENED TREE, it's trunk blackened by fire as is the mangled frame of the car.

EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE/PARKING LOT - NIGHT (EVENING)

The library stands on a hill, lit. A poster and some distant applause and squawks on a PA system tell us that Fiona's Cowboy Poetry and Songs Event is winding down.

Lyman is in his truck. He looks over at Fiona's car parked in the next row. He grabs a flashlight, and moves to the passenger window of her car.

He inspects her right tire. The tread is worn. He leans on the front bumper -- the shocks are shot. He shakes his head.

He turns the beam of his light to her back seat, filled with Bookcrossing signs, books in various states of repair, dog treats, chaos. He looks around, then quickly slides under the car to check things. He's appalled by how unroadworthy the car is.

A LOUDSPEAKER VOICE

CAMPUS SECURITY! You under the car! Come out. Now! Up. Spread your legs and put your hands against the car!

A SECURITY GUARD (who takes his job very seriously) is out of his car, blinding Lyman with his flashlight.

Lyman quickly slides out, gets up, puts his hands on the roof of Fiona's car.

The Guard approaches directly behind Lyman. As Lyman turns to explain...

LYMAN

(smiling)

This isn't what it looks li...

The guard turns Lyman around to face the car and kick spreads his legs.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

Whoa, hold on a minute.

SECURITY GUARD

Face forward please. Lower your left hand, sir.

Lyman hears the rattle of cuffs and obeys.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Is this your car, sir?

LYMAN

No, it's not. That's my truck over there. I work for the courtesy patr...ow!

The guard lifts Lyman's arm high up his back.

SECURITY GUARD

Just answer the question, sir.

LYMAN

It belongs to someone I know... she's a librarian here... she's my.. my... girlfriend.

SECURITY GUARD

You're going to steal your girlfriend's car?

LYMAN

No! You think I'd want to steal this piece of shit?

SECURITY GUARD

All I know is what I saw.

FIONA (O.S.)

What's going over here?

The Guard snaps a cuff down on Lyman's wrist just as Fiona arrives.

SECURITY GUARD

Do you know this man? He says he's your boyfriend.

Fiona, plays it cool.

FIONA

Depends - what was he doing?

SECURITY GUARD

He was prowling around. Acting really suspicious. Is this your car?

FIONA

Yes, sir. Isn't she a beauty?

Lyman interjects.

LYMAN

I was just waiting for you, 'honey'.

(a beat)

You didn't leave me the key.

The Guard looks to Lyman, then back to Fiona.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

You know how you always forget...?

Fiona enjoys watching Lyman's discomfort for a moment, then...

FIONA

Oh... yeeeeeeess.

(reaching into her pocket)

You're right, they're both still here on the ring. Silly me. I'm so sorry 'honey'.

Fiona walks to the passenger side of the car, then slides the keys across the roof to Lyman's free hand.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Would you drive, honey? It makes me feel safe.

The Guard seems a little disappointed as he uncuffs Lyman.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Thank you, Officer for being so vigilant. There's no telling what kind of idiot pervert could be lurking out here in the night. From what I hear there are axe murderers everywhere.

Fiona unlocks the door. They get in.

INT/EXT. FIONA'S CAR/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

FIONA closes the door. The security car disappears through the parking lot. .

FIONA

So I'm your girlfriend now?

LYMAN

I just said it to get rid of him.

FIONA

Cause I'm not your girlfriend.

LYMAN

Your car is a deathtrap.

FIONA

You mean Sacajewea?

Lyman is incredulous. Fiona pats the dashboard.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Yeah. Yeah, names are important - after the Indian scout. She's a heroine of mine.

Lyman feels uncomfortable as he changes the subject.

LYMAN

Why did you say I'm flawed?

FIONA

Intuition. I'm flawed. Everyone's flawed. I'm sorry I said it.

LYMAN

I don't want to frighten anybody.

FIONA

I was disappointed. And then you were mean to Floyd, and I love Floyd. And he could be your friend too if you didn't hate dogs so much.

LYMAN

Your intuition is just terrible. I don't hate dogs... Has Mrs Blair called about the parrot? I called and they said she was fired. I've put ads in the paper and gone online... I don't know... Just don't bail on me, Fiona.

(beat)

And I do like dogs. I just... haven't ...spent a lot of time around them lately.

She pulls a piece of paper from her pocket.

FIONA

I did some research on 'M A 17'. I think it's a phone number, from way back, like the 1930's.

LYMAN

But that would make the Parrot 80 years old.

FIONA

Parrot's are like the giant tortoises of the bird world.

LYMAN

Whose number is it?

FIONA

I don't know. All the old records are in the State library, archive stuff, for reference only.

EXT. FIONA'S APARTMENT - DAY

LYMAN stands at the front door with crumpled map in hand. He awkwardly exchanges glances with JOHN (a male neighbor, mid-20's) as he gets into his car - an sports car. Floyd barks.

JOHN

Hey, are you lost?

Fiona, wearing pyjamas and slippers, swings the door open.

FIONA

Who is it Floyd?

LYMAN

You didn't even check to see who was there. I could have been...

FIONA

- an axe-murderer. Yeah, I know. Come on in.

LYMAN

Just for a second, after the library I need to go home and sleep.

She turns, goes back inside. Lyman enters slowly.

INT. FIONA'S APARTMENT - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Fiona goes to her room, but keeps talking.

Lyman scans the apartment. Books everywhere, in bookcases and boxes, stacked and leaning against the walls, book binding equipment on a long table. Library posters hang on the wall.

LYMAN

Lots of books.

FIONA (O.S.)

I buy them at yard sales. Sometimes they're even in the 'free' box.

LYMAN

(to himself)

I can't imagine why...

FIONA (O.S.)

I mend them and pass them on.

LYMAN

Exciting hobby.

FIONA (O.S.)

Well, it's not collecting other people's trophies but...

LYMAN

Those trophies would be thrown away...

She pops her head around the door.

FIONA

So would those books.

Fiona is dressed in wildly mismatched clothes, as if she dressed in the dark. She retrieves a pair of dark sunglasses from her purse. She jangles her car-keys.

FIONA (CONT'D)

So we gonna take Sacajewea?

LYMAN

I wouldn't get in your car even if it was named Mother Teresa.

FIONA

Fine, we'll take yours. Wigglebutt where's your leash?

Floyd turns wanders across the apartment, picks up his leash.

LYMAN

He's not coming with us, is he?

FIONA

He's at home for nine hours while I'm at work. He comes.

INT/EXT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Lyman and Fiona walk towards the library.

LYMAN

A seeing eye dog? He's so short he couldn't see over a curb. This is embarrassing as hell.

A few steps behind him, Fiona approaches - white stick, dark glasses, Floyd on a leash, - to those who don't know better, a blind woman.

FIONA

It's the only way they'll let him in - and he hates to miss out.

She takes his elbow with her hand.

LYMAN

Stop that.

FIONA

I've taken up Shelton's mystery. The least you could do is participate.

LYMAN

He doesn't answer to Shelton.

FIONA

He's yours now. You can name him.

LYMAN

He's not mine to name. He's just the messenger.

FIONA

So were just gonna keep calling him the Parrot? I'll bet every time he sees you he's thinking, 'oh, there's the human.' Come on, the canine...

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY/COLLECTIONS DESK - DAY

Lyman, Fiona and Floyd walk up. PAUL, (20's), leans over the counter to look at Floyd. He turns, moves to a drawer, opens it.

LYMAN

He's calling security. I'm going to be handcuffed again.

Paul closes the drawer. Paul signs to Floyd "sit" in ASL.

He leans back over the counter and drops a dog biscuit to Floyd. Floyd catches it in the air. Paul speaks with a slight hearing impaired accent.

PAUL

Good dog. Hi Fiona, back again?

FIONA

Hi Paul, just those old phone books and census records this time.

Paul crosses to the other side of the desk for the census and phone books.

LYMAN

Funny.

FIONA

You are so gullible.

PAUL returns, passes the books to Fiona. Lyman signs "thank you for all your help" to Paul, then leads FIONA away. Fiona's eyes linger on Paul's reaction.

FIONA (CONT'D)

I didn't know you... what did you say to him to make him look like that?

LYMAN

I told him your nipples were orange.

FIONA

They are not!

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY/TABLE - DAY

Floyd is lying asleep near Lyman's leg. Fiona and Lyman are looking bleary-eyed over a stack of PHONE books.

LYMAN

It's not in 1930.

FIONA

It's not in 1931 either. Keep working forward.

Lyman reaches down and strokes Floyd's long ear. As soon as he touches the underside, Lyman jerks his hand away banging it on the underside of the table.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Did he just bite you ?

LYMAN

No, I was just holding his ear and I felt a pulse.

FIONA

Of course he has a pulse, you are so weird, Lyman.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Lyman approaches a young, attractive REFERENCE LIBRARIAN.

LYMAN

Do you have any sections on the bible?

LIBRARIAN

(smiling)

The Bible Bible? Sure. Follow me.

At the table Fiona watches Lyman & the Reference Librarian as she points to a wall of shelves filled with biblical and religious reference books.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY/CENSUS RECORD SECTION - DAY

Fiona furiously leafs through books.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY/TABLE - DAY

Lyman returns to the library table with some books. Floyd hasn't moved. Fiona is full of the joys of success.

FIONA

M A 17. I found it. It was in the 1932 book. It belonged to a J. Campbell.

The Reference Librarian arrives, carrying a few books for Lyman. He takes them from her, sets them down.

LYMAN

Thanks.

Fiona smiles, but not her usual warm smile. The Librarian leaves.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

So we just need to check the current phone books for relatives.

FIONA

Way ahead of you, Dr. Watson.

She hands him several photocopy pages.

FIONA (CONT'D)

There's two pages of Campbells and a whole column of J's, fifty at least.

LYMAN

That's OK. I'll call them all.

FIONA

No, that's ok. Let me, you sleep all day.

He indicates his Bible books on the table to Fiona.

LYMAN

Can you check these out for me? I don't have a library card here.

FIONA

You're all alike.

LYMAN

What?

She yanks Floyd up and heads over to the circulation desk.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY/COLLECTIONS DESK - DAY

Fiona is almost dragging poor Floyd along. Lyman tries to catch up to her.

LYMAN

Why are you acting so hostile towards me, out of nowhere?

Fiona slams her library card down on the counter. There's no one there.

FIONA

(screaming)

Can I get some service over here, please?

(turning to Lyman)

You're always looking for something new, something else, something other than what's right in front of you.

She slaps the desk with her cane.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Can I get some tiny hint of servility
over here?

Heads turn. Lyman proceeds out the door.

EXT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Lyman is waiting outside. Floyd ambles up, dragging his
leash. He sits beside Lyman.

LYMAN

(to Floyd)

Tough to handle these wild mood swings,
huh? Here she comes, act like it never
happened.

Fiona backs out of the doors, books cradled in her arms.

Fiona dumps the books into Lyman's arms.

FIONA

Here. Be sure to return them. Don't rip
them, Don't dog ear them, don't tear
them, don't spill anything on them.
They're in my name. I'm sorry, it's just
a release, screaming in other peoples
libraries. Come on, Floyd. Come on. You
love me.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Lyman is asleep at his desk during class. Professor Paquet
approaches him as he sleeps.

PROFESSOR PAQUET

Next time bring a pillow.

Lyman is startled awake. He sheepishly looks around and
wipes the drool from his mouth as the other students
laugh.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Establishing shot of Diner.

INT/EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Lyman sits eating alone at a table, reading a book.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Lyman is working with a wrench at a rest stop atop his truck. The Red Mustang drives by him and pulls over ahead of him.

Lyman hops into his CPV, fires it up. He drives up and pulls up behind the Red Mustang.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Lyman pulls up behind the car. A BEARDED MAN, middle-aged, is holding a tire iron and glaring at the immaculate car.

He draws a deep breath and with a tire iron smashes the passenger side rear view mirror, then moves to the front of the car and starts shattering the headlights, and then begins raining blows down on the hood, all the time ranting and screaming:

BEARDED MAN

You worthless piece of shit. Useless
sorry ass piece of stinkin' garbage. I
hate you, you son of a bitch...

He moves to the rear left wheel and smashes the hubcap. He pauses for breath when he spots Lyman heading toward him. The bearded man raises the tire iron to his shoulder. Lyman takes a gun out of his jumpsuit pocket, lets it hang at his side.

The man lowers the iron to his waist.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)

Go ahead, shoot. You'd be doing me a
favor.

LYMAN

I don't want to shoot you, sir.

BEARDED MAN

Not me, you idiot. Shoot the god damn
car.

Lyman looks at the car, back at the man.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)

This damn car is killing me.

Lyman looks more carefully at the man, looks back at the car.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)

Shoot the car. Please. Please.

Lyman scans the empty highway, slowly lifts the revolver, squeezes off one round, shattering the rear window.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)

Yes! Thank you. Thank you. Again!

Lyman moves around to the side of the car. He shoots again, the bullet exploding the tire.

BEARDED MAN (CONT'D)

Yes. Beautiful. Now me.

LYMAN

No, no. It's my gun.

Lyman pulls the trigger again and shatters the driver side rear view mirror. Finally he shoots the hood for good measure.

BEARDED MAN

Thank you. Thank you. Yes!

The Bearded Man drops the tire iron to the concrete. He looks suddenly drained, and relieved. A chuckle escapes as he smiles.

INT/EXT. LYMAN'S CPV/HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Lyman sees broken reflector lights along the guardrail and spots some skid-marks that lead into the grass. He pulls over and fires his lights on.

He rests his forehead on the wheel, takes a deep breath, looks up. Lyman knows that it's a wrecked car.

LYMAN

(grabbing his mike)

140, this is 190. I've got a wreck at mile marker 92. Send an ambulance.

TOM

Copy 190.

EXT. HIGHWAY/CAR CRASH - NIGHT

Lyman runs down the shoulder, raking the darkness with his flashlight. His shoes tread on shards of glass. Car trim, a spilled suitcase, clothes, shoes and make-up are spread out.

Lyman looks at the crushed car down in a ditch... Lyman moves closer to the car, flames begin to lick the hood, he spots the body of a YOUNG MAN pinned down in the wreckage. He drags the man out from under, but a pulse check quickly tells him that the crumpled man is dead.

Lyman's flashlight beam strikes a tiny hand under a pile of blood stained clothes. He drops to one knee, reaches out, places a thumb on the tiny wrist. Lyman's head drops. He's gone.

A FAINT VOICE CRIES OUT. Lyman's flashlight sweeps across the grass... nothing. He rushes up the embankment. A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN is sitting propped up against the guardrail, her head drooping forward.

Lyman cradles her, lifts her bloody face.

LYMAN

It's okay, it's okay.

She tries to speak. Lyman can't hear her. He cups her head in his two hands, lowers his ear to her lips. We don't know what she says. Lyman looks back into her remarkably beautiful face.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

I'm fine, I'm fine.

She is peering deeply into his eyes, nods imperceptibly, a bubble of blood appears on her lips as she dies.

EXT. HIGHWAY/CAR CRASH - DAWN

Lyman cradles the dead woman in his arms. In the distance the ambulance is finally arriving.

COLLEGE/LIBRARY/STUDY CARRELL - DAY (LATER)

Lyman sits at a hidden carrel, his homework spread out on the table. Fiona comes across him - he's a little startled.

FIONA

What are you doing here? I've been looking all over for you.

LYMAN

I've got a deadline. I need to keep my head down.

She gives him a printed email.

FIONA

Well, here - Mrs. Blair from the Home emailed. It's Charles Ballard's phone number. Ruby's son.

LYMAN

Thanks. You're amazing.

As he starts to read, Fiona scans the many empty carrels in the library.

FIONA

Were you hiding from me?

LYMAN

No, of course not, it's just quieter back here, that's all.

But Lyman isn't a great liar. She turns and leaves. Lyman realizes he's hurt her - he starts to tidy his desk quickly.

EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE/PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON (LATER)

Lyman rushes out of the doors in time to see Fiona speeding away in Sacajewea.

EXT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (MORNING)

Lyman sits on the steps of his trailer. He hasn't been to bed.

Lyman pulls out the printed e-mail Fiona gave him the night before, and dials the number.

LYMAN

Well, somebody in this town knows you. Hello, is this Mr. Charles Ballard?

EXT. CHARLES BALLARD'S HOUSE - DAY

Lyman steps from his truck. A man CHARLES BALLARD (late 50's) is watering houseplants on the porch. He looks up, stops what he's doing.

LYMAN

Mr. Ballard?

CHARLES BALLARD

You the parrot fella? Prepare to meet your maker.

EXT. CHARLES BALLARD'S HOUSE/PORCH - DAY

Mr. Ballard is watering his plants while Lyman sits on a bench.

CHARLES BALLARD

Momma believed since you never really knew when you're really going to go, it was best to keep a clear conscience. Made for some pretty awkward conversations, I tell you. Some things a son should never know.

LYMAN

When did you buy the bird, Mr. Ballard?

CHARLES BALLARD

We bought it for Momma for company after Daddy died in '79. That's when she had the stroke and that was when she and the bird went into Murray's Home.

LYMAN

Do you remember who you bought it from?

CHARLES BALLARD

Yep. Sure do. He was being transferred out of state, so he couldn't take the bird with him. I've got some information on him if you'd like. I'll get it for you.

EXT. CHARLES BALLARD'S HOUSE/PORCH - DAY (MOMENTS LATER)

Ballard brings out a Veteran's Reunion folder, sits and opens it.

CHARLES BALLARD

That's him - Stowalski, Eli Stowalski.
Seen him at a Screaming Eagles reunion
about four years ago.

LYMAN

Nice to see him after all those years?

CHARLES BALLARD

Naw. He was always a total asshole.

INT. STOWALSKI'S HOUSE/DEN - DAY

LYMAN (V.O.)

Hello, Mr. Stowalski? This may seem
strange but I'm calling about a bird.
It's the parrot you owned, Mr. Stowalski,
back in the 60's.

STOWALSKI

What? What are you talking about - that
thing should have been dead years ago...?

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

Lyman is talking on his cell. He stands before a celotex
board. On the board is a map covered with information
about the parrot - dates, names, pictures of the parrot,
sayings.

LYMAN

No, sir, it's him all right. Mr. Ballard
confirmed it.

INT. STOWALSKI'S HOUSE/DEN - DAY

STOWALSKI

Ballard? That asshole? What would he
know?

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

LYMAN

Did you teach him anything in particular,
Mr. Stowalski?

STOWALSKI (V.O.)

Who, Ballard?

Stowalski is shouting - obviously a little deaf.

LYMAN

No, sir. The parrot.

STOWALSKI (V.O.)

Sure did. I painted his head white...

INT. STOWALSKI'S HOUSE/DEN - DAY

STOWALSKI

...with shoe polish, I was an instructor with the 101st Airborne - 'screaming eagles' you know?

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

STOWALSKI (V.O.)

So I taught him to say 'I'm an Eagle'. The boys in the flight ready room would rub his cage before flying,

INT. STOWALSKI'S HOUSE/DEN - DAY

STOWALSKI

...for luck. Gave them some confidence, a feeling of self worth you know, like we were all in it together.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

LYMAN

Do you remember where you bought him?

STOWALSKI (V.O.)

From the paper. Damn thing cost me 50 bucks, back when that was real money.

Lyman knows now to shout.

LYMAN

You recall when that was?

STOWALSKI (V.O.)

Let's see. I was just transferred, yeah, so, musta been early June 1968. That's all I know. Good luck.

LYMAN

Thank you.

INT. STOWALSKI'S HOUSE/DEN - DAY

STOWALSKI

Asshole.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

Lyman looks up at the parrot.

LYMAN

Screaming eagles, huh?

Lyman salutes the parrot.

PARROT

I'm an Eagle!

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY/MICROFICHE ROOM - DAY (AFTERNOON)

On the Microfiche machine, old newspaper classified ads scroll up the screen. Lyman squints as he scans. He finds what he wants, frames it up, then hits the 'print' button.

A page slides out: **For Sale Parrot \$50 w/cage: D. Weber, 85-3833.**

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

Lyman pins the ad to a celotex board that's attached to his wall.

He's taped out a grid, from 19?? to the present day, showing the bits of information he now has - 'ELEANOR REEVES', 'MURRAY'S RETIREMENT HOME', 'RUBY BALLARD', then way back in the 1930's, 'MA17'. His grid is frustratingly empty in the middle.

He has his cell to his ear. We hear the sound of a phone dialing, and then Mrs. Weber's voice is heard on the answering machine.

ANSWERING MACHINE (O.S.)

No-one is home. Please leave a message.

He deliberates, then goes for it:

LYMAN

Hi... I'm not sure if this is the right number... uh... but I'm calling about a parrot you sold... in the 60's... Anyway, I own it now and.... eh...

I'd really appreciate if you could call me at 555-0115.

(he goes to hang up, then)

My name is Lyman, L.Y.M.A.N. Thank you.

THE PARROT

Prepare to meet your maker!

Lyman looks to the Parrot, notices it pluck a feather and drops it to the floor, where more sad feathers lie.

INT. VETERINARIAN EXAM ROOM - DAY

DR. REYNOSA (early 30's, Latina Woman) shuts the door to the cage. The parrot inside, has a plastic collar around its neck.

DR. REYNOSA

Parrots thrive on contact. Feather plucking is often associated with loneliness. Have you thought about getting him a mate?

LYMAN

No, this guy's pretty ancient - sex would probably pop his heart like a balloon.

Dr. Reynosa looks squarely at Lyman, as the bird tries to squirm out of the collar.

DR. REYNOSA

Well, I don't know about you, but I'd say it's a better way to go than dying bald and alone.

EXT. FIONA'S APARTMENT - DAY (MORNING)

The door swings open. Fiona stands there in red flannel pajamas.

LYMAN

Why do you do that? You didn't look through the peep hole.

Floyd steps over the threshold, rises up on his hind legs and flops his two broad front paws on Lyman's kneecaps.

FIONA

It's none of your business how I open my door.

LYMAN

It's just not safe, that's all.

FIONA

Look, just because I'm not afraid of my shadow is no reason for...

The apartment door across the breezeway opens. John, in a grey suit and mauve tie steps out, briefcase in hand.

JOHN

Hey, is everything okay here?

She looks at Lyman, then back to John.

FIONA

Hey John, yeah, everything's fine.

JOHN

What Sacajewea break down again? Cause I can give you a ride?

FIONA

Oh no, she's great, but I would love a ride in your new car some time.

JOHN

Yeah, sure thing, babe. I can give you a ride any time you want.

They watch John unlock a new black sports car. He looks back at Fiona with a smile, gets in.

LYMAN

That's a very unsafe color.

FIONA

You're a very unacceptable person. He just got a promotion and he bought a car he's wanted for years.

LYMAN

Did you see that tie puking out of the collar of his shirt?

FIONA

Oh who made you the Fashion Police?

Floyd is staring up at Lyman as if waiting for an answer.

LYMAN

I came to apologize. I should have told you I was there.

I'd just been given all this homework I'd missed and... I brought a present...

FIONA

I hate all that flowers of forgiveness crap.

LYMAN

It's for your dog. It's got these reflective studs on it.

FIONA

Just like you...

He bends down so that he's eye level with Floyd and pulls out a reflective collar, the same color as Lyman's vest. Lyman puts the collar around Floyd's neck.

FIONA (CONT'D)

His name is Floyd, and just because he accepts your gift doesn't mean I forgive you.

LYMAN

(to Floyd)

In that case, would you go out with me?

No response.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

(to Fiona)

How about you?

FIONA

I can't. Remember? Our schedules are so opposite. It would either have to be early in the morning or really late at night.

LYMAN

Then come to work with me. Tonight? I'll pick you up. But Floyd can't come.

FIONA

He sleeps a lot anyway. Are you serious? I can come?

He nods.

FIONA (CONT'D)

God, that is so cool!

She steps over and gives Lyman a hug and a peck on the cheek and steps back inside.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Floyd get your butt in here.

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE/LIBRARY/RETURNS COUNTER - DAY

Lyman approaches the front desk. Lyman discreetly reaches into his carrying bag, removes an orange jumpsuit and slides it over to Fiona.

LYMAN

Change into this. I'll be back at 9.

FIONA

Roger that.

LYMAN

And don't bend the visor on the cap. I like it the way it is.

INT/EXT. LYMAN'S CPV/COMMUNITY COLLEGE/PARKING - NIGHT

Lyman is sitting in his parked CPV. A hand raps the window.

FIONA (O.S.)

Howdy. Deputy Courtesy Patrol Officer James reporting for duty.

She shows what she has done to the jumpsuit -- cuffed and rolled it to look oddly chic, her hat on 'homey' style.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Do I have to wear this sleeping bag? It is so not my color.

Fiona gets in the other side of the truck.

LYMAN

From now on, you do exactly what I tell you or the free ride is over. Got it?

FIONA

Got it.

LYMAN

You don't get out of the truck, roll down the window, or touch anything unless I say?

FIONA

Sir, yes, sir.

LYMAN

And if I tell you to do something, you do it immediately. You don't ask why. You just do it. It's for your own safety. Understood?

FIONA

Understood.

LYMAN

OK. Now scoot across the seat and kiss me.

Fiona grins, moves to Lyman's side till the bills of their caps touch. She reverses hers again, and leans back and switches on his light bar.

Neither notices the lights. A BRIGHT LIGHT hits their faces. They both look over at a familiar face. The campus SECURITY GUARD is peering in the window. Lyman rolls down his window.

SECURITY GUARD

Oh, my God, it's you again.

LYMAN

Sorry.

SECURITY GUARD

It might help if you turned off your light bar while you make out.

The security guard leaves.

LYMAN

You're supposed to wear clothes under the jumpsuit.

FIONA

I've got clothes on.

LYMAN

What clothes?

FIONA

My underwear.

LYMAN

What kind of underwear? I was just wondering.

FIONA

Well continue wondering.

EXT. LYMAN'S CPV/HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The CPV merges onto Highway and heads west.

INT/EXT. LYMAN'S CPV/HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Fiona locks it. A moment passes, then:

FIONA

Did you know you have more college credits than I do? I looked you up. You've taken every utilitarian course offered over the past ten years. Every fix-it, lifesaving, plumbing, woodwork, Italian, Chinese, self-defense... And yet no degree?

LYMAN

I take courses to learn stuff.

FIONA

Well if you'd taken some philosophy or literature classes you'd understand the parrot.

LYMAN

I don't need a formal education to understand the obvious.

FIONA

Oh, really. Tell me what's so obvious ...

LYMAN

Shut up.

FIONA

You shut up.

LYMAN

No - *'Shut up'* - it's the first thing the bird said, which means *'Listen and stop talking long enough to understand the rest'*.

WITHOUT WARNING Lyman suddenly yanks the steering wheel, swerving the CPV across the lanes, instinctively throwing out his right arm to protect Fiona. The light from the headlights kicks off something in the road as he barely misses it. The CPV screeching to a halt on the shoulder. He flips on the warning signals.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

You okay?

She nods.

EXT. LYMAN'S CPV/HIGHWAY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Lyman gets out, walks back along the shoulder. Fiona watches as Lyman retrieves a crumpled aluminum ladder, drags it to the CPV, and tosses it onto the bed of the truck.

INT/EXT. LYMAN'S CPV/HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Lyman gets in.

FIONA

You gotta be careful. That truck must have been going at least ninety.

Lyman pulls back out onto the highway. Lyman immediately picks up from where they left off.

LYMAN (V.O.)

Okay, 'stay tuned,' be alert in case of danger. 'Speak for yourself,' Make up your mind, be an independent thinker. Next '*I'm an eagle*' - that just feel good to say it.

FIONA

'*I'm an eagle.*' Yeah, feels good. I like to say '*I'm a Tyrannosaurus Rex*'. Come on, try it with me.

LYMAN

Uh-oh, work. Stay here.

EXT. LYMAN'S CPV/HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Lyman pulls over to stop behind a late model pickup in the middle of nowhere. Lyman gets out, flashes his badge.

LYMAN (IN SPANISH)

What seems to be the problem? "Dondevan"
("Where you headed?")

Fiona watches as THREE WOMEN roll out of the cab to meet him. We overhear..."El carro no prende." ("Car won't start")... '*Olor extrano.*' ("Strange odor")

EXT. HIGHWAY/PICK-UP - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

Lyman and Fiona work beneath the front hood of their car.

Fiona stands nearby watching. A WOMAN starts the car. Wild applause.

THE WOMEN wave and blow kisses as they drive off. Lyman picks up his tools, he and Fiona head back to the truck.

FIONA

I couldn't fix my car if I had to.

LYMAN

The internal combustion engine is all cause and effect. Anyone can understand it, then fix it.

FIONA

As opposed to people?

LYMAN

Yeah, well, they're not so easy to fix.

FIONA

What does that mean?

LYMAN

Relationships - they don't last, they all break in the end.

FIONA

That's fairly pessimistic.

INT/EXT. LYMAN'S CPV/HIGHWAY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

They get back into Lyman's CPV.

LYMAN

I'm being honest. Take you, for instance. You've lived in what, a half a dozen cities since you left school, with a whole string of temporary friendships. Then you move on.

FIONA

I have friends and family all over the country.

(beat)

What about you? Have you ever crossed the state line?

LYMAN

It's not like I've got family to visit.

FIONA

OK, I was engaged once, but he wouldn't set a date. Then I found out he was already married. No one else ever came close.

(beat)

Maybe they don't all last, Lyman, but like they say, that doesn't mean the fall wasn't worth the ride.

Fiona looks at him, wondering if she should go on.

FIONA (CONT'D)

You know you could pick your own first name...

She pulls his Department of Highways Courtesy Patrol ID from the visor, his name reads 'None, None, Lyman' DOB 1975/76..

LYMAN

I never found a name that seemed right.

(beat)

I guess my mom wasn't one for sewing on name-tags.

Fiona reads the same odd date of birth - **1979/1980**.

FIONA

But what about your birthday? When do you have your party?

Lyman smiles at her.

LYMAN

It's not important.

Lyman and Fiona drive away.

FIONA

Take this exit. Make a right. I want to show you something.

EXT. COTTONWOOD MOTEL - NIGHT

The CPV is parked by the roadside, with the lights pointing towards the motel.

FIONA

Your parents checked in here No previous address. Then in an moment they were taken, and you continued.

(beat)

After the accident, they couldn't be traced, no next-of-kin, and you couldn't remember anything. Missing persons turned up nothing. I chased every lead, blood types, car registration, every receipt. I just kept thinking that there must be someone out there who would have missed them.

He's silent. Finally...

LYMAN

Code of the West, rule number one "Don't inquire into a mans past" Don't you read those books you pass around?

FIONA

Rule number two "Take the measure of a man for what he is today." You're right I'm sorry... Do you hate my guts now?

LYMAN

Yeah, I do hate your guts, but I sure like the bag they come in. Come on, lets eat.

Fiona smiles despite herself.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Lyman and Fiona sit at a table. They're back on the Parrot quest.

FIONA

I understand about 'M A 17' and some of the rest, but then there is the Bible stuff.

LYMAN

And the '*prepare to meet your maker*'- you never know when your number is up. Don't have regrets. The Ecclesiastes thing makes sense -

FIONA

Yep, eat drink and be merry. I'm all for that. It's very optimistic.

LYMAN

It is not. I'm prepared and you just keep your fingers crossed.

FIONA

You think the parrot makes sense, but there are some things you are never going to learn. You don't understand life like I don't understand how to fix a car. It's all just one big tangle under the hood.

LYMAN

I think some women believe that a man is born the moment they meet him.

Margie arrives with water, snaps her chit book open, and gives Lyman a look.

MARGIE

Now what'll you have?

Lyman hands Margie a trophy from his bag.

MARGIE (CONT'D)

Why thank-you, Lyman.

(reading the plaque)

'To a Builder of Men.' Well, I do my best.

He realizes he's been remiss.

LYMAN

Margie, this is Fiona.

MARGIE

I heard about you. Is my Lyman sweet on you, honey?

Fiona extends her hand, and they shake.

FIONA

I think it's the way that I dress.

MARGIE

Thank you, Lyman, for bringing her by. I approve.

MARGIE V/O

They were talking so hard, like there was a fire somewhere and only their words could put it out. I could tell just by the sound, seemed like Lyman was finally getting closer to an answer.

I left them alone. I decided dinner was on me that night.

INT/EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Lyman and Fiona (viewed through Diner window) are chatting.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

They are mid-meal. Fiona has the lists of J. Campbells from their Library hunt. The list is scribbled and scrawled on, with highlighter marks and doodles everywhere.

LYMAN

How many Campbells have you called?

FIONA

I'm still trying - I have dozens left. Some of these people just talk and talk, I can't get them off the phone. What?

LYMAN

Cheese - stuck on your teeth.

She runs her tongue over her teeth...

LYMAN (CONT'D)

... and toast crumbs at the corners of your mouth.

She dabs at the corners of her mouth.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

... and butter on your lips.

She smiles, licks her lips.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

You want to go fishing?

FIONA

Oh, Lyman, you say the sweetest things.

EXT. HIGHWAY/BRIDGE - NIGHT

A huge magnet (on the end of a steel cable) splashes into dark lake water.

Above we see Lyman and Fiona, staring down over the bridge railings - the CPV is parked in the breakdown lane of the bridge.

LYMAN

-- it takes a few seconds to reach bottom
but it comes up quick.

Lyman turns to the CPV, sets the winch to haul the cable up.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

I've found hubcaps, cans, tools. Once I
found a set of braces, with a tooth in
it.

Lyman cuts the winch and lifts the magnet over the rail, letting it clunk onto the concrete. A rusty tin can and a railroad spike cling to the magnet.

FIONA

Wow Lyman, that's the mother lode, now we
can retire and live happily ever after.

He looks up at her with some pride.

LYMAN

Maybe one day I'll solve a great mystery -
the crime of the century. Until then I
just fish for clues.

Fiona turns back to the lake. Lyman wipes down his findings, throws them into the debris bin.

When he turns around she's gone.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

Fiona?

After a moment she appears from the CPV cab. She's carrying a small muffin with small pink candle stuck in the middle, all the time protecting the flickering flame with her other hand.

FIONA

(in her best Marilyn Monroe)
Happy birthday, Mr. Lyman.

LYMAN

What?

FIONA

I couldn't bear the thought of you never
having birthdays.

This might be the kindest thing anyone has ever done for Lyman.

LYMAN

But I don't know what the date is.

FIONA

So I figured someone had better pick a date, so I say it's today. Unless you can prove me wrong. I declare this the thirty-somethingth birthday of Baby Boy Lyman.

(beat)

It's around now that you blow out the candle, before I'm horribly disfigured by molten wax?

Lyman does so.

FIONA (CONT'D)

There - you're no longer a birthday cake virgin.

He looks into her eyes, then he kisses her. She kisses him.

Fiona unzips her jumpsuit, takes Lyman's hand and puts it on her bare stomach. Lyman looks at her and down to his fingertips touching the white waist line of her big, comfortable cotton panties.

FIONA (CONT'D)

If you're looking for something French and lacy, you got the wrong girl.

She takes his hand and slips it round to the small of her back.

LYMAN

I uhhhh, I don't think I'll be talking any more from here on out.

INT/EXT. LYMAN'S CPV/OFF ROAD - NIGHT

Fiona unzipped and unzipping Lyman, caught in the excesses of their jumpsuits as half undressed, they fall onto the seats in a tangle of hands. No thought, just pure emotion.

He pauses, strokes her face, mesmerized.

LYMAN

You're perfect.

She reaches down to his groin, all the while looking him in the eye. He gasps - he's now incapable of speaking.

FIONA

SShhhhhh.

They kiss.

As they lose themselves in pleasure, neither of them is aware of the approaching lights of the oncoming vehicle, so when they hear a screech of tires, the blast of a horn, and the horrible unmistakable sound of metal on flesh then the pained yelp of a dog, it takes an odd moment to realize what's happened.

Then, as if a switch has been flicked, Lyman is pulled right back into work mode, looking up and down the road. He spots the tail lights of a large car driving away.

LYMAN

They hit a goddamn dog.

He swears, a string of obscenities. He zips up.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

Stay here.

EXT. LYMAN'S CPV/HIGHWAY/BRIDGE - NIGHT

Lyman jumps out of the truck.

He looks both directions as he pulls a few flares from a hip pocket. He strikes them and pitches them on the road.

Fiona watches from the truck, zipping herself up.

Lyman finds the dog, half in the dry grass at the end of the bridge. It's lifeless.

Fiona watches as Lyman comes to the passenger side, and grabs a shovel from the bed behind the cab.

FIONA

Is it going to be okay? Lyman? What are you doing?

Lyman can't bring himself to respond, he opens the door and reaches across Fiona for his gloves when they hear a faint yelp.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Oh God , please no.

They both look ahead to where the dog is trying to move in the thick tufts of grass. A smear of blood on the road.

LYMAN

Just stay in the truck, Fiona!

Lyman reaches into the glove box and takes out the HANDGUN. Fiona hears the safety click off, looks up at him.

FIONA

Lyman, we can take it to the vet.

Lyman grabs his shovel, walks away and she screams at him.

FIONA (CONT'D)

(screaming)

Lyman, please Listen to me! Lyman,
please! Lyman, no!

Lyman hears her but keeps on walking. He reaches the dog, does not pause, straightens his arm and fires. Lyman buries the dog as Fiona cries.

INT/EXT. LYMAN'S CPV/FIONA'S APARTMENT - DAY (MORNING)

The low morning sun lights their faces. On the seat beside them is a bloody collar and dog-tags. Silence.

Lyman and Fiona are parked in front.

LYMAN

Fiona. There was no saving it.

FIONA

How can you bear to do this?

LYMAN

I've never had to share it with anyone.

FIONA

I don't want to share that.

...Fiona gets out and closes the door.

INT. FIONA'S APARTMENT - DAY (MORNING)

Fiona enters and closes the door. She slides to the floor, and Floyd waddles over to greet her.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER/BEDROOM - DAY

Lyman can't sleep. He's playing over the events of the previous night.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

Unshaven, unshowered, Lyman sits on the step, finishes whittling - we can see he's carved it into a small but recognizable wooden parrot.

He enters, places the wooden 'companion' in the cage. The Parrot looks at Lyman.

PARROT

Give some to the Parrot.

LYMAN

Just you and me now, buddy. From now on, thou shalt be called... 'Zane'.

The CELL PHONE RINGS. He drops the tools, reaches for it, but is disappointed to see it's an unknown number.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

Hello?

MRS. WEBER (O.S.)

Hello? Can I speak to Mr. Lyman, please?

LYMAN

Speaking.

MRS. WEBER (O.S.)

This is Mrs. Weber. I'm returning your call about the Parrot.

EXT. DUNCAN WEBER'S HOUSE/PORCH - NIGHT

The porch is lit. Lyman walks up the steps to the front door with ZANE in the cage. MRS. WEBER (60's) opens the screen door.

MRS. WEBER

Come on in. One more won't make a difference.

INT. DUNCAN WEBER'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lyman enters. There are eleven people in the room. Their sheer number and diversity are impressive - aged from 5 to 85.

Lyman holds the cage up in the air. MR. WEBER is gazing at the parrot with his mouth open.

WEBER

Jesus Christ, it's him. I don't believe it, he's still alive.

MRS. WEBER

Yep. That awful bird.

(to Lyman)

Mr. Lyman, this is my husband, Duncan.

Lyman shakes hands, nods hello.

WEBER

He's a sight for sore eyes.

The room is hushed as the old man takes the cage from Lyman and sets it on the ottoman. He addresses his children and grandchildren.

WEBER (CONT'D)

Kids, this is old Tonto. My dear friend from back in the olden days when I was your age, Henry.

Weber motions Lyman to take a seat on a couch between a woman Lyman's age and another woman some ten years older. A little girl crawls onto Lyman's lap and stares into his eyes.

The older of the two women shakes Lyman hand.

BILLIE

I'm Billie. Dad always talked about his parrot like he was human.

SUSIE

Sue.

BILLIE

We didn't know what to believe.

Weber is smiling.

WEBER

Tonto was my best friend. We used to listen to The Lone Ranger on the radio every week. He could mimic all of the theme music.

Weber sings the theme song for the Lone Ranger.

WEBER (CONT'D)

Does he still say 'Hi-ho Silver away'?

Lyman shakes his head.

LYMAN

No.

WEBER

Oh. I thought he was the smartest, funniest thing in the world.

MRS. WEBER (O.S.)

That was before he met me, of course.

Weber and his wife smile.

WEBER

I was an only child. This bird made me a lot of friends at school. He could do tricks, he was like a one man circus.

LYMAN

Why did you sell him, Mr. Weber?

MRS. WEBER

- because I didn't want him around the children. I thought they carried diseases.

WEBER

That's not why you wanted him out, Ella.
(to Lyman)
It was the green-eyed monster, jealousy. She loves me more than life itself. She couldn't bare to share me with anyone.

MRS. WEBER

Well if you can find anyone who'll take you now, they're welcome to you.

Everyone knows she doesn't mean it.

LYMAN

He must have been pretty rare back then - did he come from a pet store?

WEBER

Oh no, from a neighbor, Mrs. Hall. She has a son, Michael back then we called retarded.

SUSIE

Dad I told you, you can't say that.

WEBER

Challenged, yes. He was challenged. The kid learned how to speak by mimicking the bird.

LYMAN

Do you know where the Halls got him?

WEBER

Oh, sorry, no. I never asked, and they're long dead now.

THE PARROT

MA 17

WEBER

MA 17! MA 17.

LYMAN

It must have been hard giving him up, Mr. Weber.

WEBER

Yeah, but look what I got in exchange, a world of family. The bird got me through my childhood and Ella got me through the rest of it.

EXT. DUNCAN WEBER'S HOUSE/PORCH - NIGHT

Weber is at the open door.

WEBER

Thank you for bringing him by, son. I hope you find what you're looking for.

EXT. LYMAN'S TRUCK/FIONA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lyman pulls his truck to a stop in front of Fiona's apartment. He gets out, crosses to her door and knocks.

Floyd howls, Lyman turns and leaves.

INT/EXT. LYMAN POV/CPV/HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Lyman sees objects in the road.

Impressionistic: a cow eating in the middle of the road(ghostly). Lyman driving, riveted by the onslaught of headlights from the opposite direction. An air horn from a passing truck snaps him out of his reverie. He strains his eyes to see a dark stretch of road ahead.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (MORNING)

Lyman is looking at Fiona's picture on his cell phone. He dials and hears...

AUTOMATED OPERATOR

The number you dialed has been changed,
disconnected or is no longer in service.
If you feel you have reached this...

Lyman stands staring, unshaven. In his cage, Zane is slowly decapitating his wooden companion with his beak.

THE PARROT

Prepare to meet your maker!

INT/EXT. LYMAN'S TRAILER/YARD - DAY

Lyman's unshaven, sitting over a cup of coffee, staring out at the confines of his yard. He looks like crap.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Lyman's truck, light bar blinking, stands roadside next to a blue Chrysler, steam billowing out from under the hood. The driver, a big man, is drunk and surly.

LYMAN

190 here. Mile marker 83. Driver's out of
his car. He looks drunk. Send the
troopers.

DISPATCH

190. Roger.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Margie has pulled up a chair and is listening raptly to Lyman.

MARGIE

Why'd he want you to shoot his car?

LYMAN

He was tired of it.

MARGIE

Gee, I'm tired of my boss...

Margie smiles.

LYMAN

Why do you work the night shift?

MARGIE

- because my husband does too. It's the only way we can be together, have a life.

LYMAN

Aren't the people who are out at night strange? Don't you get tired of it?

MARGIE

I like my job. I like the people who come in at night. My regulars.

(studying Lyman)

You thinking about quitting the courtesy patrol? 12 years. You've been at it for so long.

LYMAN

Cars don't break down as often, but people need me as much as ever. I don't know, it just doesn't seem to mean much anymore.

MARGIE

You'll find it again, like your parrot. Being lost is only temporary.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Lyman is sitting at his kitchen table with a cup of coffee staring a thousand yards, he looks like crap.

Lyman hears a knock at the door. He opens it and Fiona steps into the trailer and past him, carrying the jumpsuit she wore on their 'date night'.

LYMAN

Hi.

He starts to close the door.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

Well, Floyd can come in too.

FIONA

He's fine where he is.

Fiona sets the jumpsuit down on the table.

FIONA (CONT'D)

- this is for you.

(beat)

And I need the library books - they're overdue.

LYMAN

I'm sorry, I forgot. I'll pay the fines.

She starts to speak when she spots Zane.

FIONA

Thanks.

Lyman gets the library books and sits beside her.

LYMAN

I call him Zane now. I named him. -

Lyman is looking for some approval.

FIONA

That's good, Lyman. I'm happy for you.

LYMAN

Well, I called you - you're number was disconnected and I came by...

FIONA

Yeah, I've been really busy, getting ready to leave. I've found another library that needs me. So...

LYMAN

You're leaving?

FIONA

I thought I'd spend some time with my family.

LYMAN

Fiona, you know there wasn't anything else I could do for that dog. She was suffering...

FIONA

I know that, Lyman.

(more softly))

I know that. It was all just a bit too stark for me. I felt like that dog was a part of me or something. But, I can't think of you out there, every night with all of that... So, um I have something for you.

She sets the well worn J. Campbell list on the table. There's a new address scribbled at the top, beside a name - *Ivy Campbell*.

FIONA (CONT'D)

A going away present. Ivy Campbell, daughter of Jack Campbell, from the 1930 census. There's no phone number but there's an address.

LYMAN

If you'd just stay we...

FIONA

I've never been able to stay. Maybe I don't want to believe what you believe. Maybe I don't want to know what you know. I have to leave.

She stands and is out the door and into the yard before he can move.

EXT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (AFTERNOON)

As Fiona gets into her car, Lyman follows her

LYMAN

I knew you couldn't take it.

She stops and turns.

FIONA

So you were trying to sabotage us? Is that's why you let me go with you?

LYMAN

Oh, I'm not the one who is running away. You'll never get anywhere in that piece of tin. You've got romance novels for auto sense. Your right back-up light is out, your tire treads are shot, you need an engine overhaul. God only knows what condition your brakes are in...

Lyman is clutching at straws but can only try.

LYMAN (CONT'D)

If you head out onto the highway without knowing where the jack is, you'll end up stranded in the middle of the desert or on top of some mountain or...

It's as close as he can get.

FIONA

Yes, Lyman, but people like you -- and they are few and far between -- they always seems to show up. Good-bye.

She drives. Floyd moves to the back seat and looks at Lyman through the rear window.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - ANOTHER DAY (AFTERNOON)

Lyman is in bed bur he hasn't slept. He tosses and turns.

INT/EXT IVY CAMPBELL'S HOME/NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Ivy Campbell (70's) is doing a crossword puzzle. Through the window, she sees Lyman walking up to the front door.

Ivy doesn't move. Lyman knocks and then waits.

LYMAN

Excuse me, I'm sorry to drop by like this. Does Ivy Campbell live here?

Ivy opens the door.

IVY

I don't want any insurance. I'm going to die whether I've got it or not.

Lyman unwraps a blanket covering the parrot in his cage. The parrot looks slightly better without his collar.

LYMAN

I'm here about this parrot. I believe your father owned him?

Ivy stops, and looks up.

IVY

Mr. Roosevelt? But how could that be?

INT. IVY CAMPBELL'S HOME/KITCHEN - DAY

Ivy and Lyman sit opposite one another at the kitchen table, the parrot is on a table nearby.

IVY

I gave him away in the 50's to a woman named Emma Cowen. She'd lost a baby so I gave her Mr. Roosevelt to keep her spirits up. She had him until she had her next child, then she gave him to a slow fella.

LYMAN

Mike Hall.

IVY

Yes. And I lost track from there.

LYMAN

He still says your phone number from when you lived on Summit Drive. M A 17?

IVY

That was our phone number? He's got a better memory than I do.

LYMAN

Who's bird was he?

IVY

My father's. He was killed in the War.

Ivy points to a picture of her father in uniform on the mantle

LYMAN

Was he a religious man?

IVY

I don't think so. Mother gave him a Bible before he left. Father said he might not read it but he would keep it in his breast pocket to protect him from a well-aimed bullet. What he worshipped, was this country.

LYMAN

Then who taught him the Bible verse - '*A bird of the air shall carry the word?*'

IVY

Why, he came to us saying that.

LYMAN

And do you know where your father got him?

IVY

Mother said he bought Mr. Roosevelt from a band of gypsies that were passing through.

Lyman's head sinks, knowing he's at a dead end.

IVY (CONT'D)

What does it matter Mr. Lyman?

Lyman opens his palms to her.

LYMAN

I've gone as far as I can go.
(to himself)
I don't know where to go next.

Ivy's a little surprised at his sudden openness.

IVY

Forward. You go forward, Mr. Lyman.
Forward.

She speaks to the parrot.

IVY (CONT'D)

We met at the beginning and the end of long lives. Goodbye Mr. Roosevelt.

EXT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (MORNING)

It's an icy cold morning. The windows of the trailer are frosted.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER/BEDROOM - DAY (MORNING) (CONTINUOUS)

Lyman wakes. It's freezing cold. He starts to pull the covers over him, but instead gets up, alarmed.

Lyman quickly plunges into the kitchen.

He looks in the cage.

The PARROT is lying on the floor among empty shells etc.

INT. VETERINARIAN'S OFFICE/EXAM ROOM - DAY

LYMAN

I woke up and the heat had gone down. I forgot to refill the propane tank. It's all my fault.

DR. REYNOSA

He's a tropical bird. He couldn't stand the freeze.

Dr. Reynosa places a small hot water bottle on the parrot's towel, covers him back up and turns on two heat lamps.

DR. REYNOSA (CONT'D)

Just be prepared, Lyman. He's an old bird. This might be his time.

Lyman's cell phone rings. He backs out of the examination room, answers.

LYMAN

Hello.

TOM (V.O.)

Lyman. I know you're taking some time off but there's been a black ice pile-up on the West street bridge. Fiona is one of the people involved.

INT/EXT. LYMAN'S TRUCK/HIGHWAY - DAY

There aren't many cars on the wet road. Lyman blares his horn as he flies through an intersection.

Lyman passes an SUV. Other cars have skidded to the side of the road. Up ahead on the other side of the road, the FLASHING LIGHTS of Frank's SQUAD CAR and Neil's WINCH TRUCK tell Lyman he's getting close.

LYMAN

Move! Get out of the way!

EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE/BRIDGE - DAY

Lyman screeches to a stop across from the accident scene. He bounds out. He scans the scene. His heart is racing.

He sees Sacajewea crumpled between two cars. All three seemed to have scraped along the outer concrete rail of the bridge before they plowed into the truck in front.

Lyman runs further down along the bridge, desperate to get a better view on the tangled wrecks. Finally he sees her, holding a cut on her face. She is safe. He breathes.

EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE/BRIDGE - DAY

Fiona is next to her car, her hand up to her face. She looks across the lanes, sees Lyman. She mouths his name. Lyman feels pure relief. He starts to cross, then looks left.

An SUV drives onto the bridge and Lyman decides to wait it out.

FIONA (O.S.)
(screaming)
NO FLOYD! NO FLOYD!

Lyman turns.

FIONA (CONT'D)
FLOYD!!! NOOO!

FLOYD is crossing toward Lyman, tail wagging.

Lyman looks again at the approaching SUV - it's going to hit Floyd for sure. Fiona is now running past the emergency vehicles towards the median.

...in the SUV the DRIVER hits the brakes.

...Fiona sees the SUV skidding.

EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE/BRIDGE - DAY (SLO-MO)(CONTINUOUS)

Lyman SLO-MO slides to the center of the highway, picks up Floyd swings him back then forward, throwing him towards Fiona. He turns and faces the sliding SUV, an odd half smile on his face as...

EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE/BRIDGE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

POV of the rear of the SUV as it slides towards impact with Lyman.

EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE/BRIDGE - DAY(CONTINUOUS)

Onlookers, people from the wreck, all look horrified as the SUV slides towards LYMAN.

The sound of screams, of metal hitting flesh. Blackness.

EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE/BRIDGE - DAY

On top of the bridge Fiona, Neil, and Frank all run across the lane to the other side.

From below we see them lean over the railing.

INT. HOSPITAL/CORRIDOR - DAY

Frank is wearing a blanket, his hair wet, FIONA is beside him, her clothes clotted with blood. A DOCTOR stands with a clip board.

DR. DOUGHERTY

And next of kin?

FIONA

No. None.

Dr. Dougherty looks at Frank.

DR. DOUGHERTY

I need your accident report?

Frank and Dr. Dougherty exit. Fiona speed dials her parents.

FIONA

Hi Daddy.... It sucks. Mom, I need to come home again .

Fiona breaks into sobs.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY

Frank and Fiona are cleaning up, tossing old food, stowing dishes, etc. Frank shows Fiona a scrapbook he's found. In it are photos of a young Lyman at various ages, always standing apart from the foster family, always holding onto a dog.

FIONA

Right there. And I thought he couldn't stand Floyd.

FRANK

No, he just couldn't let himself get too close to a live dog, that's all.

PARROT

Stay tuned!

EXT. LYMAN'S TRUCK & TRAILER - DAY

ECU Fiona is driving carefully.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (LYMAN LYING ON A BED)

Camera slowly pans up Lyman's body. He could be in a morgue. There's a sudden JOLT. Lyman's eyes fly open. Another JOLT and his whole body is lifted up and down. Lyman is shocked. The sound of wind roars in his ears.

LYMAN

Tornado! Tornado!

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The kitchen window hood is down and Lyman can't see out.

The wind howls, the trailer tilts and rocks. Floyd, wearing an eye-patch, barks. Something in a back room SMASHES. Lyman holds onto the bed heaves himself up. He hops over to the door, his leg in a cast, pushes hard to open the door...

LYMAN

What? Zane?

INT/EXT. LYMAN'S TRAILER/HIGHWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

To his astonishment, Lyman sees the countryside speeding by. The trailer is on the highway and being pulled. The wind slams the door shut. Lyman falls back on the bed.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

It's all so incomprehensible. Lyman finds a CB radio and the note pinned to his shirt. He reads.

INT/EXT. LYMAN'S TRUCK & TRAILER/HIGHWAY - DAY

As we see Fiona carefully driving Lyman's truck pulling the trailer we hear...

FIONA (V.O.)

Lyman, I'm taking you with me. I want to give you my family. You can't work for a while anyway and I have a few weeks until my next job so I thought we could look out for each other. And you can finally see some of the rest of the planet. You were out cold for a week. Then you started telling me about gypsies. Me and half the hospital staff. They finally let me take you this morning. I'll stop if you want to turn around. Call me on Channel 9.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Lyman finds the CB and presses the talk button.

LYMAN

In this state it is against the law to haul a trailer with someone in it.

EXT. LYMAN'S TRUCK & TRAILER/HIGHWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The trailer veers onto the shoulder and slides to a stop.

INT. LYMAN'S TRAILER - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The door flies open and Fiona through it. She's holding a document in her hand.

FIONA

Unless you've got a special license. Frank and Neil and Tom helped - And don't worry, it all passed inspection.

Lyman looks it over. She sinks down beside him and Floyd, and Zane perched in his cage watching.

LYMAN

Why didn't you ask me?

FIONA

You've been on pain killers. Plus I didn't trust you to make the break. You're unreliable when it comes to your own interests.

LYMAN

I still get confused. Tell me again...

Lyman smooths back Floyd's coat, sees Floyd's eyepatch.

FIONA

Oh well, when you threw him to me I caught him, but then I stuck my finger in his eye. He'll get better too.

She crawls in beside him.

LYMAN

Fiona, I've never been outside the county line -- not in my whole life.

FIONA

Just wait till you see the Atlantic Ocean.

LYMAN

Fiona ?

FIONA

- and you know what else? I got a tool pouch to snap onto your wheelchair, just in case. We're prepared.

LYMAN

(A pause.)

What the heck. Let's go. Surprise me.

Lyman wraps his arms around her, they kiss.

EXT. LYMAN'S TRUCK & TRAILER/HIGHWAY - DAY

Lyman and Fiona are in the front seat of Lyman's truck. They drive away.

Angle across Fiona towards where Lyman lifts his hand out the window. He forms an airfoil with it, and lets it fly in the wind like a boy.

*