

“ALIVE, ALASKA”

BY:

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DARE TO DREAM!

"ALIVE, ALASKA"

FADE IN:

INT. BOEING 727 - NIGHT

ON SCREEN: November 21st, 1971

A MAN struggles with a large duffle bag, drag-carrying it to the rear of the plane. Periodically he stops, and waves a gun in the general direction of the other passengers and crew members, who watch.

He is dressed in warm clothing and wears a parachute. Three other parachutes are draped over his arm. He reaches the rear of the plane.

MAN

OK, let's get this door open.

He waves his gun in the direction of a STEWARDESS. She goes to the rear of the plane and complies.

MAN

Now get the steps down.

STEWARDESS

That would be dangerous, sir.

MAN

It'll be more dangerous if you don't.

The stewardess complies with his demand. The wind whistles eerily as the steps descend into the slipstream.

The man throws the extra parachutes through the door. Holding the duffle bag firmly, he ventures out onto the steps, and jumps. He disappears into the night.

The stewardess retracts the steps, and then has to struggle to close the door.

She picks up an intercom mike, keys it, and reports to the PILOT.

STEWARDESS

He's gone, sir.

PILOT (OS) (FILTERED)

That's a relief. What did he do with the extra 'chutes?

STEWARDESS

He threw them out, sir. Why did he ask for them, I wonder?

PILOT (OS) (FILTERED)

Probably to confuse the issue as to what he was up to. Maybe he wanted to make sure we didn't give him a fake. What was his name again? Check your manifest.

The stewardess produces a large document, and reads it.

STEWARDESS

Cooper, sir. Dan B. Cooper.

OPENING CREDITS ROLL

INT. NYC SUBWAY STATION - DAY

A group of people wait for the train. They check their watches and peer into the tunnel.

Slightly apart, a tall, slender African American man, ROLAND D. HUNTER paces. He appears to be in his early forties, handsome, well-built, but talking to himself.

He wears a neat set of coveralls, over the left breast pocket is stenciled the name ROLAND. Over his right breast pocket is a stenciled logo which reads:

JOSEPH REESE & BROS.

FINE FURNITURE

Roland continues to talk to himself; it serves nicely to provide him solitude, as other people avoid him.

ROLAND

(Mumbling) No good jug headed pelican chin Jay Leno. Would have to have James Brown on a Monday night.

He peers anxiously down the track. The station clock reads 8:15

ROLAND

Don't he know people have to go to work the next day?

He checks his watch, shakes his wrist and holds it up to his ear. He looks down the track again.

ROLAND

Kick his goofy butt if I ever catch
up with him.

He gets so close to the edge of the platform that
another MAN reaches out to grab him.

MAN

Be careful, sir.

ROLAND

No sweat. I'm OK. Just wish this
train could be on time for once.

MAN

I hear you. I'm late too.

A steady drone builds up from the tunnel. People start
to crowd toward the edge. Roland maintains a little
distance.

With a roar, the train bursts out of the tunnel, wheels
braking, steel on steel. On the front of the lead car
is a large "N." It stops, the doors slide open and
people disgorge. The people waiting to board let them
out, then enter quickly. Roland enters nearly last, but
manages to find a seat.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Picking up speed as it leaves the station, the interior
of the car is suddenly dark. Then the overhead lights
come on. People are relaxed, some are asleep.

The train switches tracks amid much clacking and
squealing. The lights blink periodically. The train
picks up even more speed, and hurtles along the track.
Occasionally it even brushes the side of the tunnel.
This does not seem to bother the riders.

Roland still mumbles.

ROLAND

Dumb dude could have just let me
fall. My troubles would be over.

Bright lights stream through grimy windows as the train
squeals to a stop in another station. The doors slide
open and people disembark. As the new riders start to
crowd in, Roland forces his way through them.

The station clock reads 9:02.

Roland hurries toward the exit, passing a sign reading
45th St.

He moves quickly and checks his watch.

EXT. CORNER OF 45TH AND 7TH AVE. - DAY

Roland goes toward a huge sign down the street a few blocks. It reads Jos. Reese & Bros. - Fine Furniture.

Looking at his watch again, he breaks into a trot. People rush in both directions and impede his progress.

Even in his haste, he is polite to everyone, even a couple who bump him.

INT. HOLLYWOOD APARTMENT - NIGHT

ON SCREEN: August 5th, 1962

A beautiful blonde LADY lies in her bed. She appears groggy. She is phoning someone.

LADY

Robert, I need to see you tonight.

There is an unintelligible response. The lady cries.

After holding the phone for a few moments, it slips from her fingers, and hangs down near the floor, swinging. A VOICE-

VOICE (OS FILTERED)

Are you all right Marilyn? ...
Marilyn?

The lady does not respond, her eyes are open, unseeing.

INT. REESE WAREHOUSE AND SHOWROOM - DAY

Standing by a time clock which reads 9:07 is a giant of a man, WALTER MILLS. His arms are folded across his chest. His round black face expresses disapproval. He is as round as a beach ball and clad in a pseudo cop's attire. He is a shift supervisor at Reese, and is also employed as a night watchman.

Roland bursts through the front door.

WALTER

You're late, Rotundo. Again.

ROLAND

Late? Not the most fashionable of entrances, I presume.

He reaches for his time card and slides it in the slot.

WALTER

This is really getting out of hand, don't you think?

Roland pulls the lever that stamps his time card, ignoring Walter.

WALTER

You need to find a job closer to your home. If you're late again, I'm going to have to bring it to Mr. Reese's attention. You're going to get canned, you know.

Roland takes a step toward his spot in the warehouse, then stops.

ROLAND

I'll tell you what, Mr. Toy Cop. Try that and see where it gets you. Mr. Reese knows I work my buns off around here. Sometimes I'm still at it at midnight. Overtime pay? Ha! Go ahead, maybe you'll get a real badge to go with your rubber nightstick.

WALTER

Toy cop? *Toy cop?* Are you out of your skull? Let me tell you something, Robot. I'll get your bony butt fired so fast your ancestors will get the fax before you do. You'd better check your attitude, *comprende?*

ROLAND

This has zilch to do with an attitude check, you marble mouthed melon shaped pitiful excuse for a foreman. My name is ROLAND, not Roby, Robot, Roman or any other cutesy name you think I enjoy.

Roland fumes. He is almost ready to fight. Spittle forms on the corner of his mouth

ROLAND

Besides, deliveries often take me half the night. I've never heard you asking about overtime pay for me. You're my supervisor, or at least you're supposed to be. I make a lot of money for this outfit, how much do you contribute?

Roland and Walter stand nose to nose during this conversation. Walter is impassive, Roland is upset.

ROLAND

I'd love it if you'd learn my name, and stop calling me anything but.

WALTER

You know what? I don't care if you work around the clock. I'm working two jobs, and I do 'em both well.

Walter is now a little more perturbed. He inches closer to Roland.

WALTER

One of these days, you're going to be reminded of the famous words of Dr. Bruce Banner. "*You're not going to like me when I'm angry.*"

He puffs himself up like The Hulk, the veins in his neck pop out.

WALTER

Curb your tongue, String Bean, before your mouth writes a check your butt can't cash. Or would you like to go to knuckle city right now?

Roland takes a step back, and his face grimaces.

FLASHBACK:

ON SCREEN: -Three years ago-

Roland stands in the background as Walter and an unidentified employee duke it out. Walter wins decisively.

END FLASHBACK:

Roland's face is a mask of fear. He then relaxes and turns toward his work station.

ROLAND

Excuse me if I don't faint from fear. I'd love to accommodate you, but I've got work to do.

He exits into the warehouse.

MONTAGE: ON SCREEN: Later that day

- A) Roland and a co-worker load a delivery van.
- B) They drive the van through town.
- C) They arrive at a well-to-do residence.
- D) They unload some expensive furniture.
- E) They stop for lunch.

F) They return to the warehouse and load up again.

EXT. REESE'S FURNITURE STORE - NIGHT

Roland drags his frame out, goes back to the subway, and boards.

INT. ROLAND'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Roland enters and goes to his refrigerator. After looking, he sighs and closes the door.

He looks around his apartment. The couch is covered with a large throw, but the brick support in one corner still shows. There is one threadbare recliner and an end table overflowing with old letters and junk mail.

On one wall is a bookcase, the only bright spot in the room. Roland flips a light switch and an overhead track light comes on, to illuminate a collection of James Brown albums. Neatly placed in a rack are several 45 rpm records, about 100 tape cassettes and CDs.

To the left of the bookcase stands a multi-media player. Roland selects a cassette and puts it in the player. The room is filled with the music of The Godfather of Soul, James Brown.

He turns the volume up and leaves the room. A shower can be heard, and soon Roland re-enters, wrapped in a towel.

His skin glistens, his muscles ripple in the artificial light. He turns the volume down, and sprawls in his recliner.

His eyes close, but the strains of James continue.

The cassette stops, and Roland rises to change cassettes. After changing cassettes, he stretches and goes into his bathroom.

INT. ROLAND'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

The coveralls he was wearing lie in a heap on the floor along with his underwear. He pushes them aside with his foot.

He opens his medicine cabinet. There is a medicine bottle there labeled "Demerol." He takes it out and looks at it.

He removes the cap and shakes about fifteen capsules into his hand. He turns on the water and reaches for a glass, then stops.

He replaces the glass in its holder and turns off the water. He gazes at the capsules, sighs, and replaces them in the bottle.

INT. ROLAND'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Roland returns, this time in a bathrobe and slippers.

A calendar hangs on the wall next to a closet door. There are fourteen Xs crossing out two weeks. Roland crosses the room and puts his finger on the first X. A faint smile crosses his face.

He opens the closet door, reaches in, and turns on a light. There are only a few items of clothing hanging there, but there is fishing gear galore.

On the inside of the closet door hangs a fishermen's dream, a Penn AR 50-130 casting rod, coupled with a Penn AF 4000 reel. A tackle box sits on the floor.

Roland kneels, and almost lovingly opens the box, to reveal a myriad of plugs, flies and other tackle.

He finally closes the box, stands and turns off the light. Reluctantly, he closes the closet door.

As he stands, he once again checks the calendar and nods his head knowingly.

He retires into his bedroom.

The room darkens, as the sound of city traffic invades the mind.

INT. ROLAND'S KITCHEN - DAY

Roland drags himself out from his bedroom. He is donning the same bathrobe he wore the evening before.

He makes coffee, and from his breadbox he pulls out two slices of bread. From his fridge he procures a jar of peanut butter and makes himself a sandwich. He yawns and sits, waits for his coffee to perk. While he waits, he nibbles.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Roland enters, once again dressed in company coveralls.

He checks his watch as the train arrives. He mumbles.

ROLAND

At least it's only a couple of minutes late today.

He boards in a repeat of yesterday.

INT. REESE'S FURNITURE - DAY

Walter stands at the time clock, which reads 9:01.

Roland comes in, almost breathless.

WALTER

You're getting closer, motor mouth.
Maybe tomorrow, you'll actually be
on time.

ROLAND

Give me a break, dude. I can't
drive the train.

WALTER

Have you thought about taking an
earlier one?

ROLAND

And hang around an hour waiting to
go to work? I think not.

WALTER

It'd be a shame if you got canned
just before your vacation. Better
try just a little harder.

ROLAND

Don't even threaten my vacation.
I'll put out a contract on you.

WALTER

Just get to work. It's gonna be a
busy day.

Roland goes into the warehouse.

INT. REESE'S WAREHOUSE - DAY

A delivery van is backed into the loading dock. Roland
and his helper, JAKE JORDAN, load various items of
furniture. Included is a gorgeous TV set. As it goes
into the van, Roland checks the invoice.

ROLAND

Wonder who bought this baby.
Somebody with bucks, I'll tell you
that.

MONTAGE:

A) Roland and his helper make a delivery.

- B) They stop for coffee at a White Tower.
- C) They make another delivery.
- D) They are driving to the next delivery, Roland checks his watch,

ROLAND

One delivery before lunch, then all we have is the TV set.

JAKE

Could we get it all done before lunch? I need the afternoon off to take my old lady to the doctor.

ROLAND

I'll go you one better. We'll do the next delivery, and you can split. I'll be able to handle the TV by myself.

JAKE

Hey, thanks, man.

They continue on to the next delivery.

INT. WHITE TOWER - DAY

Roland sits, eating a burger and fries. He banter a little with the cute red-head who serves him. He checks his watch.

ROLAND

Gotta blow, don'tcha know.

He stands up, winks at the red-head and leaves.

EXT. RITZY MANSION - DAY

The van is parked by the curb and Roland has the TV on the lift-gate.

He looks up a long, long flight of stairs, leading to the mansion. He places the TV on a hand truck, and backs up the stairs, pulling it up one step at a time.

At the top, he stands in front of the massive door and rings the bell.

Chimes can be heard from inside.

The door opens, slowly. Inside the mansion is dark. Standing in the ante way is every man's dream.

LUCINDA BRONSON, petite maid for the owner of the mansion, mid twenties, gorgeous and aware of it greets Roland.

LUCINDA

Well, good afternoon Mr. Delivery Man. I see you're on time.

Roland stands with his mouth agape, balancing the TV on the hand truck.

LUCINDA

Bring it in, my good man. It goes in my room, just off the kitchen.

ROLAND

Your room? You mean this is yours?

LUCINDA

Of course it's mine. Even we domestics are allowed a little entertainment.

She retreats into the mansion, Roland hand-trucks along behind with the TV.

As they enter the great hall, high vaulted ceilings come into view. Light filters through stained glass windows and casts rainbows around the room.

Lucinda goes through the kitchen, and another door, with Roland close behind.

INT. LUCINDA'S QUARTERS - DAY

She motions to a corner.

LUCINDA

Park it right there, partner.

Roland wheels the hand truck to the corner, stands it upright, and wiggles the hand truck free.

ROLAND

Wouldn't you like it on a table?
I'm allowed to do that, you know.
Union rules allow a little leeway.

LUCINDA

Oh, don't sweat the small stuff.
I'll get the butler to help me later.

She steps closer to Roland.

Roland fidgets, but does not retreat from her.

LUCINDA

You look like a man who doesn't eat regularly. Could I get you a sandwich, coffee, anything?

ROLAND

Actually, I just had lunch, but a cup of coffee sounds good.

He looks at his watch.

ROLAND

I'm not expected back at the warehouse for a couple of hours. But won't your boss get upset if you start feeding the hired help?

LUCINDA

He'll never know. Who's going to tell him? Besides, he's out of town for a couple of days.

She turns and abruptly leaves her quarters, motioning for Roland to follow.

He follows, like a puppy on a leash.

A look at Roland's face tells what is on his mind.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

ROLAND

I can certainly stand to spend a little time. Bring on that coffee, and sure, a ham sandwich would be nice.

He practically devours her with his eyes, and she notices.

Lucinda shakes her booty slightly as she pours coffee.

Roland sits at a table, still watching her as she creates a masterpiece of a sandwich.

She sets it in front of him and smiles.

LUCINDA

Got time to eat this, Tiger?

ROLAND

I'm not really a tiger. More like a pussycat.

LUCINDA

Somehow, I knew that.

She bustles around, doing meaningless tasks while Roland eats.

She activates a tape player, and familiar music plays.

LUCINDA
You like James Brown?

ROLAND
Oh, man. Do I ever! You're a girl
after my own heart.

LUCINDA
(Pirouetting) Now, if I only had
someone to dance with...

Roland finishes his sandwich, and takes a big swallow of coffee.

ROLAND
I've been know to cut a few rugs.
Will I do as a partner?

He stands and moves toward Lucinda. She almost jumps into his arms.

LUCINDA
I thought you'd never ask.

They dance superbly together. Anyone watching would believe they'd been dancing together for years.

Roland whispers in her ear. She laughs.

They step it up, and Roland whirls her expertly. At the conclusion of an extended dip, she whispers in his ear.

As they stand up, she giggles, takes his hand and pulls him toward her quarters.

They disappear behind her door.

ON SCREEN: Some time later

They re-appear, clothing in disarray. Lucinda buttons her uniform and smooths it out with her hands.

Roland buttons his coveralls, and tries to get his shoes on at the same time.

LUCINDA
Mmmmmm. There's something about you
delivery guys.

Roland completes getting his shoes on, clears his throat, and pulls the invoice from his coverall pocket.

ROLAND

Wow. I'm going to have to get back or they're going to miss me. Guess we'd better get your bill settled.

Lucinda reacts with a grimace.

LUCINDA

Bill? What bill? You've been paid, dude.

ROLAND

Hold up here. I haven't been paid with anything I can turn in to my boss. If I don't bring him money, it comes out of my pay. You're good, lady, but you ain't worth what this TV would cost me.

Lucinda draws herself up to her full stature, and looks indignant.

LUCINDA

Bet it's the best you ever had. Besides, I don't have any money.

Without a word, Roland takes his hand truck, goes back into Lucinda's bedroom, and comes back out with the TV.

He heads resolutely toward the door.

LUCINDA

Hey! You can't take my TV.

ROLAND

Can and will. You got no receipt. Pay up or this goes back to the warehouse.

Lucinda hurls invective at him that would make a longshoreman blush, but Roland continues out the door, down the long flight of steps, and puts the TV back in the van.

Lucinda continues to berate him, every step of the way.

INT. DELIVERY VAN - DAY

Roland drives, whistling. He stops for a traffic light and checks his watch. His wrist is empty!

ROLAND

Son of a...

He reaches in his back pocket.

ROLAND

Oh. No!

He whips the van in a U-turn and screams back the way he came.

EXT. DOOR OF MANSION - DAY

Roland stands, pushes the doorbell and pounds on the door at the same time.

ROLAND

C'mon, I know you're in there!

The chimes can be heard, over and over.

The door swings open slowly, like before.

Instead of Lucinda, the butler, a large man with scars on his face appears. WATKINS does not appear intimidated by Roland's anger.

WATKINS

What do you want, buddy?

ROLAND

Errr, I'm sorry. I was expecting Larry to answer the door. Is he here? No? Shoot, I've obviously got the wrong address.

He retreats quickly. Watkins watches him impassively for a few seconds, and then closes the door.

Roland hurries down the steps and reaches the van.

ROLAND

Whoosh! Talk about a set-up.

He enters the van and drives away.

He returns to the warehouse, punches out and goes home.

INT. ROLAND'S APARTMENT - DAY

James Brown is once again making Roland's day. He sits, still dressed in his work clothes listening.

As the tape comes to the end, he gets up and replaces it.

He goes once again to the calendar and counts the days he has left before vacation. Besides the Xs marking the vacation days, there are smaller check marks, on each day that has transpired prior. There appears to be about ten days left. Roland is downcast.

He perks up slightly and goes to his closet. Opening the door, then the tackle box, he admires his collection. After a decent interval he replaces everything, turns off the light and closes the door.

ON SCREEN: Days pass

Roland stands looking at his calendar, again. The check marks have closed ranks with the Xs, and Roland appears overjoyed.

He picks up the tackle box, grasps the rod and reel, and leaves the apartment.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Roland stands behind an ancient Oldsmobile, at least twenty years old. The turtle deck is open, revealing a huge trunk, full of fishing gear.

He places the tackle box beside a pair of hip waders, slicker, and several older rod and reel combinations.

He places his pride and joy gently on top of everything else, takes a long satisfying look and slams the turtle deck. It takes three slams to get it to stay shut.

He looks around, all is quiet. The neighborhood sleeps.

ROLAND

Well, old girl. Just a few more minutes and we'll be on our way. Better enjoy your new plugs and rotor, money's scarce, and the Catskills are gonna cost big bucks.

Roland gets in the car, and after a few tries, it starts. There is a little smoke coming from the tailpipe.

INT. ROLAND'S CAR - DAY

With a James Brown tape already playing, Roland drives the car out of the parking garage into light (for New York) traffic.

As he drives, several other drivers notice him and grimace. One even laughs.

ROLAND

Don't laugh, buddy. It's paid for.

He drives under an overhead sign that reads "To Yonkers- Major Deegan Expressway - Toll Booth Ahead."

Please have toll ready."

He slows up and tosses coins in the hopper. The green light comes on and he speeds up, merging with traffic.

The Oldsmobile is loud, but running smoothly.

ROLAND

OK girl, we're on our way. Look out fish, Roland's coming.

An overhead sign, Woodbury, proclaims another toll stop. Roland stops, and is issued a ticket.

Faint traces of steam are coming out from under the hood. The temperature gauge is slightly high.

The tape stops playing, and Roland changes it.

- A) He drives by Ardsley Travel Plaza. The temperature gauge has risen slightly.
- B) He drives by Sloatsburg Travel Plaza, and the gauge has risen a little more.
- C) As he drives by Platteskill Travel Plaza, he notices the gauge. By now it's registering HOT.

ROLAND

Wow! OK girl, next stop. I'll fill your radiator and drain mine.

An overhead sign proclaims "Milepost 99 Parking. Next Right."

He pulls off and parks, exiting his car

EXT. MILEPOST 99 PARKING LOT - DAY

He pops the hood and raises it. Steam is pouring out from under the hood. Gingerly, he releases the pressure cap. Even more steam escapes.

ROLAND

I'm sorry girl. There'll be water here somewhere.

He looks around, and sees some fairly heavy bushes. He disappears into them for a short while.

Reappearing, he is buttoning his fly.

ROLAND

That takes care of my problem. Now to see about your problem.

He opens the trunk, paws around underneath all the gear

he has stowed there, comes out with a plastic anti-freeze container, and shakes it.

ROLAND

Of course it's empty. No one starts a trip with extra water for the radiator.

He looks around and sees a small creek flowing by the parking lot. He clammers down and fills the jug by holding it under water.

He falls once trying to come back up the embankment.

By now, the engine has cooled enough to remove the radiator cap, which he does.

Very slowly he pours water into the radiator. He has to go back and fill the jug again, and falls again.

Radiator full, he closes the hood, goes around back and tosses the jug back in the trunk and slams it. He has to slam it three times before it locks.

He goes to the driver side door and has his hand on the handle, when...

Seemingly from nowhere, tires squealing, a car comes right at him. He watches for only a couple of seconds then vaults over the hood of his car. The other car, a black Mercedes, narrowly misses Roland and the Oldsmobile as it rockets back onto the expressway.

ROLAND

Hey! Watch where you're going, you son of Satan! Are you drunk? You trying to kill a guy or what?

Roland shakes his fist at the retreating vehicle.

ROLAND

I'd give you a one-fingered salute, but you're already too far away to see it.

He gets back in his car, and drives back onto the expressway.

INT. ROLAND'S CAR - DAY

Once again, James Brown holds sway, and Roland has relaxed somewhat. The sun casts long shadows. The Oldsmobile temperature gauge holds steady on normal.

They pass under a sign, "Exit 21, Catskill- Cairo next right."

Roland turns off the expressway and stops at a toll booth. He hands the AGENT his ticket.

AGENT

That'll be four bucks, sir.

Roland hands the man four dollars, waits a few seconds and the barrier rises.

AGENT

Have a nice day, sir.

Roland drives on through.

ROLAND

Don't tell *me* what kind of a day to have. I know what kind of a day I'm gonna have. (Smiles) Hang on, fish!

The road is now two lanes and Roland drives past several pristine farms. Cows are being driven toward their barns. Twilight is approaching.

Up ahead, he sees a black Mercedes. It is swerving dangerously on the narrow road.

ROLAND

I'll bet that's the sucker who almost killed me. Would you look at him go, girl? Don't ever let me catch you driving like that.

He reaches out, and playfully slaps the dashboard.

He follows the other car up, into hill country.

With a screeching of tires, the Mercedes swerves to the left, then to the right, and off the road down a steep embankment.

ROLAND

Serves you right, turkey. Try to run me over and that's what you get.

Not even slowing down, Roland continues driving. After several long seconds, he slows down and stops.

ROLAND

Aw, who am I kidding! That poor dude might still be alive down there. Not likely, but possible. OK, girl, let's go back and check.

He whips a u-turn and heads back, It is now completely dark.

ROLAND

I may be a lot of things, but
heartless is not one of 'em. I'll
at least call 911, and they can
scrape him off the rocks and bury
him.

He reaches the spot where the Mercedes left the road.
The cable guard rails are destroyed and tire tracks dig
into the loose dirt, heading downhill.

ROLAND

Oh, man! This dude has got to be
history. No one could have survived
that trip downhill. It's gotta be a
two hundred foot drop.

He stands looking down and calls out.

ROLAND

Hey! Anybody alive down there? If
you're alive, you'd better answer.
I'm not going to stay here all
night.

He listens, but there is no response.

He walks away from the ruined guard rails. He takes
only one step, when he hears a faint answer.

VOICE

Help! Is there someone there? I'm
hurt real bad.

ROLAND

Hang in there. I'll go somewhere
and get an ambulance out here.

VOICE

No! Don't leave me. I'll die down
here.

ROLAND

After that fall you should be dead
anyway. I wouldn't be able to help
you. I'll go somewhere and call
911.

He takes a few steps away.

ROLAND

(to himself) If I can find a phone.
Where will I even start to look?

VOICE

No! Don't go, please. I'm hurt bad.
Can't you come down here and help
me?

ROLAND

Hey, dude! You're two hundred feet down, and it's dark.

VOICE

But I *need help*, bad! I think my back is broken. Please come down.

Roland continues to peer down into the darkness. Little by little, his vision improves. The car is now visible, however faint.

It is precariously hung up on a clump of alder bushes. There is more hill below it.

ROLAND

Just don't move around, or you'll fall farther. I'll be right back.

VOICE

(Getting fainter) Please help me. I won't last much longer. Ohhhh...

ROLAND

You almost killed me before, now you're trying it again! Oh, all right. I'll see if I can get down there.

He worms his way through the tangled cables, and peers into the blackness. It is *steep*. He starts downhill.

The first step sends him tumbling. He slides down.

He stops about ten feet uphill from the Mercedes, hands digging into the moss and sod.

ROLAND

Ow! That smarts! See what I mean? You're trying to kill me!

VOICE

Oh, bless you sir. You're coming to help. I can pay, you know. I'm quite wealthy. But hurry! I'm fading fast.

ROLAND

The only thing fading is my patience. I don't know why I'm even down here. There's nothing I can do to help. I'm going to climb back up.

VOICE

(Frantically) No! No! You mustn't leave me. Just help me get out of the car. (Voice fading) Then you

can go for help.

Roland tries to stand, but it's much too steep.

He slips and slides and falls the last ten feet. He puts his hands up to break his fall.

He hits the Mercedes full force, and it starts to teeter, then plunges the remaining hundred feet or so to the bottom of the ravine.

Screams can be heard all the way down. When the car stops, moans are heard coming from within. Roland is nearly petrified, and is hanging on to the alder bushes that held the car.

VOICE

What's going on? What are you doing? Now I know my back is broken.

Roland works his way down almost frantically.

ROLAND

I'm sorry, man. It was an accident. But how come you're still alive? Either fall should have killed you. If you weren't drunk, you'd be dead.

Looking through the hole where the windshield used to be, Roland sees a huge man pinned in the wreckage. He leans forward to get a better look, and his nose wrinkles.

ROLAND

Phew! How much did you have to drink, anyway? (Sniffs) And that's not all I smell, either. Did it scare you that bad?

VOICE

Don't chastise me! Just get me out of here.

ROLAND

How do you propose I do that? You must weigh three hundred pounds.

VOICE

Three twenty-five. But I'm hurt bad. You have to help me get out.

Roland stands up from looking in the car. He looks around and sees a large pole lying there. He picks it up and pries the windshield opening to widen it.

ROLAND

Look! I'll try, but no promises.

VOICE

Bless you sir, for trying.

He continues to pry the metal holding the man captive and picking up and throwing out of the way, small car parts and debris.

ROLAND

Save your blessings for when I get you out. OK, put your arms around my neck and help.

Roland bends down again and braces his arms against the dash. The man does as directed, as Roland strains and grunts, and finally after several tries, the man comes squirming out of the car. Roland helps him to lie down.

ROLAND

You are sure one heavy dude. How'd you get so fat?

FAT MAN

I eat well. Now, if you'll just carry me up the hill, you can go for help.

ROLAND

Carry you? *Carry you?* It's gonna take a crane to get you up this hill. I'll go for help now, and hope I can find a phone.

He starts to work his way back up hill.

FAT MAN

No! No! Don't leave me down here. I've heard there are wild animals here. I don't want to be eaten by a bear. (Starts crying)

ROLAND

All right. *All right!* Don't be a big baby. I'll try.

Roland straddles the man on all fours.

ROLAND

OK, put your arms around my neck and I'll try to drag you to the top. This ain't going to be easy. You're gonna have to help.

It is obvious that Roland has his work cut out; he falls several times, and can only drag the man a few inches at a time.

Finally, at the top and showing exhaustion, Roland collapses beside the man.

ROLAND

(Breathing hard) There! You're at the top. Now can I go call 911 and get you some professional help?

FAT MAN

Yes! And tell them I can pay. I'm SYLVESTER GARTH and I'm quite wealthy. I'll pay you for your time and trouble, too. How should I make the check out?

ROLAND

Well, Sylvester, I didn't rescue your sorry butt so I could be paid. You'd have been better off if I went for help and let guys who know what they're doing help you. I could have hurt you, if you were really injured. You're one lucky dude, you know that, Sylvester?

Sylvester hoists himself up on one elbow. It is obvious he has no back injury.

SYLVESTER

Call me Sly. Everyone does. You know, like Sylvester Stallone? Everyone calls him Sly.

ROLAND

Yeah, I know. But you ain't no Sylvester Stallone.

SLY

But I'm almost as rich, maybe even richer. I insist on paying you.

Roland sits up and gazes rather distastefully at Sly.

ROLAND

It takes all the fun out of being a hero if you get paid for it. Naw, forget it. Now, do you think you can make it into my car? I can probably have you at a hospital before I can find a phone to call for help.

SLY

I'll try. You may have to give me a hand.

A disgusted look crosses Roland's face. He helps Sly to the car, then goes around and gets in himself.

INT. ROLAND'S CAR - NIGHT

There is very little traffic. Roland puts a tape in the cassette player. Sly listens for a few moments.

SLY

Got any Beethoven, or maybe some Brahms?

Roland gives him a long, hard look.

ROLAND

Nope. Sorry. If it's not James Brown, I don't listen to it.

They continue on in silence. They pass a lighted sign, Montrose Valley Hospital- Next Right.

Roland pulls into a well lighted parking area, up to a door marked Emergency and blows the horn.

As he is helping Sly out of the car, two people in green surgical gowns come out with a gurney.

All three help Sly get comfortable on the gurney. It's not easy.

ROLAND

This is where I leave you, good buddy, in capable hands.

SLY

No, wait. Don't go yet. I want your address and phone number.

ROLAND

Whatever for?

Sly struggles to sit up.

SLY

I meant it when I said I'd pay you. If not money, anything you want.

Roland thinks for a moment and takes a card out of his pocket, and hands it to Sly.

ROLAND

This is where I work. I don't give anyone my phone number.

SLY

Well, I'll certainly be in touch. I pay all my debts.

ROLAND

(Under his breath) I'm not going to the bank with that.

He gets in his car and drives away.

FLASHBACK INT. LOCKHEED ELECTRA - DAY

Two pilots, a MAN and a WOMEN, sit at the controls. The woman sits in the left seat.

WOMAN

Can you give me a position, Fred?

MAN (FRED)

We should be able to see Howland.
The fog is pretty bad, though. We'd
better make a choice soon, Amelia.
We'll be ditching, now with a
little fuel for power, or in half
an hour dead stick. Your choice.

EXT. LOCKHEED ELECTRA - DAY

The lone airplane flies into a wispy bank of clouds,
and disappears from view.

END FLASHBACK

INT. ROLAND'S CAR - DAY

Roland arrives at a small village, and checks in a
motel. It is near a lake, a beautiful setting.

MONTAGE:

- A) Roland is in a boat in the middle of a lake,
fishing. He is smiling.
- B) Roland is wearing his waders, fishing a creek. He
catches a trout, removes it from the hook and puts
it in his creel. The creel is nearly full.
- C) Roland is in his motel room, cleaning his fish. He
smiles.
- D) Roland is in the motel office. The CLERK is
putting the fish in a freezer.

ROLAND

If I want to take 'em home, what's
the best way to keep 'em fresh?

CLERK

Feller over at the Frozen Storage
can pack 'em in dry ice for you.
Keep 'em almost forever that way.

E) Roland is back in his room. The smile has left his face. He is packing. There is a huge box sitting on his bed.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Roland exits, carrying the big box. He struggles, but gets it on the back seat of his car.

He goes around to the back, checks his fishing gear which is already loaded in the trunk, and slams the turtle deck. It takes three times for it to catch.

He walks around to the front of the Olds, reaches through the grill and pops the hood. He checks the radiator, then the oil.

ROLAND

Whoo-ee! Two quarts down. I'm sorry, girl. I've been neglecting you. I'll feed you when I stop for gas.

He gets in, and after a little coaxing, the car starts. It pulls slowly out of the motel parking lot.

INT. ROLAND'S CAR - DAY

They pull into a service station. Roland rolls down the window. A YOUNG LADY approaches.

YOUNG LADY

Fill her up, sir?

ROLAND

Sure, regular. Need two quarts of 30 weight, too.

Roland exits his car and goes in to the garage area. He puts some change in a machine, and gets a candy bar. He returns to his car and gets in.

YOUNG LADY

That'll be twenty six eighty, sir.

Roland pays, accepts his change, and starts the engine.

YOUNG LADY

Thank you, sir. Have a nice day.

Roland cranks the window up and drives back out onto the road.

ROLAND

There, old girl. Does that feel better? (pause) It's not like you're ever going to have to make this trip again. This was my last hurrah.

He drives through the toll gate, on to the freeway.

INT. PARKING GARAGE, NYC - NIGHT

Chugging and wheezing, the old Oldsmobile enters and parks in Roland's spot.

Roland gets out and stretches. He pats the car on the hood.

ROLAND

Thanks, girl. Now you can rest a while. So can I for that matter, as soon as I get everything unloaded.

He goes around and opens the trunk, taking his expensive rod and reel and the tackle box first. He goes into his apartment.

INT. ROLAND'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He enters with the stuff he got from the car, puts it down and goes back out. He returns momentarily with the big box and sets it down.

Seemingly exhausted, he crashes on his couch.

ON SCREEN: -Monday Morning

Roland is performing his morning ablutions. He stands at his bathroom lavatory, brushing his teeth. He finishes, rinses his mouth and hangs up his toothbrush.

He starts to turn away, then stops and opens the medicine cabinet. He removes the bottle of Demerol, looks at it a long time and then replaces it.

ROLAND

Not now. Not yet. But soon....soon.

INT. REESE FURNITURE - DAY

Walter stands by the time clock which reads 7:56. Roland enters.

WALTER

Well, good morning! On time, even. Welcome back from vacation. Catch any fish?

Roland takes his time card and punches in.

ROLAND

Good morning Mr. Mills. Yes, indeed
I caught some fish. I hope you and
Mr. Reese both like trout.

WALTER

Indeed we do. Good to have you
back.

Roland retreats back to his work station. He is greeted
by several employees, including his partner.

MONTAGE:

- A) He and Jake make several deliveries.
- B) They stop for lunch at a White Tower. They sit
drinking coffee, killing the rest of their break.

JAKE

So, Roland. Give me the lowdown on
your vacation.

ROLAND

Fishing, fishing, and more fishing.
Best way to relax I know of.

Roland looks off into space. He leans back in his
chair.

ROLAND

Too bad it was my last trip. The
country sure is beautiful.

JAKE

Why your last trip? They going to
close it down next year?

Roland smiles.

ROLAND

No, but by next year, I'll be
closed.

JAKE

(Serious) What're you talking
about, man?

Both men rise and take their trash to the trash can
preparing to return to work.

ROLAND

Just something that's been on my
mind for a while now. What good am
I? No wife, no kids, not even any
family. I've got two brothers. If

either one of them walked in here right now, we wouldn't recognize each other.

He holds the door for Jake as they leave.

ROLAND

Shoot! I don't even have a steady girl.

JAKE

Yeah, but Dude. What you're thinking about...

ROLAND

Well, not to worry. Nobody will miss me that much. And you might even get my job as crew leader.

JAKE

Don't even talk like that, man.

They return to their deliveries. Several times, Roland notices Jake looking at him strangely.

ROLAND

Hey, cool it Jake. I haven't even decided how, much less when.

INT. REESE WAREHOUSE (TIMECLOCK) - DAY

Walter stands with arms folded. Jake enters to punch in.

JAKE

'Morning, Mr. Mills. Has Roland come in yet?

He takes his time card and punches it.

WALTER

Yes he has. He's back having coffee waiting for you.

JAKE

Have you noticed anything funny about the way he's been acting lately?

WALTER

I just notice that he's almost always on time for work. Why?

Jake moves a little closer to Walter, and speaks softly.

JAKE

Don't ever tell him I told you, but he's been talking crazy things, like offing himself. He's got me worried.

Walter's eyebrows shoot up.

WALTER

That is serious.

Walter reaches in his pocket and removes a ball point pen and notepad.

WALTER

Thank you, Jake. I'll keep my eyes open.

He makes a notation. Jake continues on to work.

INT. ROLAND'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Roland goes to the phone, picks it up and dials.

ROLAND

Hello, Jake?

JAKE OS (FILTERED)

Yeah, it's me. Roland? What do you need?

ROLAND

Remember the other day we were talking about my car?

JAKE OS (FILTERED)

Yeah. What about it?

ROLAND

How'd you like to own it?

JAKE OS (FILTERED)

Man, I'd love it. But you know I can't afford it.

ROLAND

Won't cost you anything. It's yours. I'll mail you the keys and the title.

He hangs up.

ON SCREEN: Moments later

Roland sits, listening to James Brown. He is still dressed in company coveralls. The phone rings.

Roland picks up.

ROLAND

Hello?

WALTER OS (FILTERED)

Hello, Roland. I wonder if I might come by to see you this evening.

ROLAND

Well, yes, I guess it's OK. But why? Have I been fired?

WALTER OS (FILTERED)

(Laughing) Nothing like that. Would eight o'clock be alright?

ROLAND

Sure. Why not?

He hangs up, thinks for a few seconds, picks up the phone again and dials.

ROLAND

Hello, Mr. Reese?...

ON SCREEN: -8:00 PM-

Roland's doorbell rings. He goes to answer it. Walter is standing there.

ROLAND

Come on in, Mr. Mills. Have a seat.

WALTER

Hey, come on! We're off work now. I'd like for you to call me Walter.

He sits on the couch, Roland, still in company garb, sits on the recliner.

Walter sees the records and CDs.

WALTER

My, will you look at that collection. Is it all James Brown?

ROLAND

Every last one. Would you like them?

WALTER

Uh, that's what I'd like to talk to you about, Roland.

He fidgets, as if extremely uncomfortable.

WALTER

Just before I called, I got a call from another employee. It was very distressing. I'm breaking a confidence telling you this, but I understand you are giving away your car.

ROLAND

I really don't need it anymore.

WALTER

But then, just before leaving to come here, Mr. Reese called me and told me you tried to give him all your fishing gear. Roland, what's going on?

Roland shrugs his shoulders.

ROLAND

Nothing, really. I just won't be going fishing anymore. I don't need the gear, or the car.

WALTER

I don't suppose you'll be listening to music, either then. Roland, I may not look it, but I'm an educated man. I recognize the signals. You're planning suicide, aren't you?

ROLAND

What if I am? It's no skin off anyone's nose. Who'd miss me anyway? I'm a nobody.

Walter immediately gets up and goes to stand in front of Roland, and puts a huge hand on his shoulder.

WALTER

In God's eyes, nobody's a nobody. He cares, Mr. Reese cares, we all care.

ROLAND

That's nice to hear, but it doesn't change my mind any.

WALTER

Promise me one thing, that you won't do anything rash until we've had a chance to talk it over.

ROLAND

I guess I can give you that much. I'm not on a time schedule.

He smiles weakly. Walter goes to the door.

WALTER

I'll see you at work tomorrow,
right?

ROLAND

Sure. I'll be there. On time, even.

Walter lets himself out, then turns.

WALTER

I almost forgot. Some guy called
yesterday asking about you, wanted
your phone number. Of course I
won't give it to him unless you say
so. Said his name was Sly, and that
you knew him.

ROLAND

Sly? Sly? Oh, yeah. Guy I met on
vacation. You can give him my
number, or not, suit yourself.

Walter nods his head and closes the door behind him.

Roland stands for a few seconds, thoughtful.

ROLAND

Sly, huh? Never thought I'd hear
from him again.

INT. REESE'S WAREHOUSE (TIMECLOCK) - DAY

As Roland enters, Walter looks at the clock.

WALTER

Well, look at you! Ten minutes
early every day this week.

Walter looks around to see if they're alone.

WALTER

Have you given any more thought to
what we talked about? Is there
anything I can do to help? Some
more vacation time maybe?

ROLAND

How about an all expense paid tour
to Alaska? Now there's a place to
fish!

WALTER

(Laughs) Hey, I just got you a
raise. You want the world on a
platter? Get to work!

Roland steps toward his work station.

WALTER

I almost forgot. That guy Sly called again. Persistent cuss. I gave him your number.

Roland nods his head, and goes to work.

INT. ROLAND'S APARTMENT - DAY

The phone is ringing off the hook, as Roland opens the door and comes out of his bedroom

ROLAND

Hold your horses! Give a guy a chance to get out of bed at least.

He rushes to pick up the phone.

ROLAND

Hello?

SLY OS (FILTERED)

Hellllloo, Roland old buddy! Up and at 'em! Rise and shine!

ROLAND

Sly? That you? What are you putting on those pancakes? You're up early! It's not even seven o'clock yet.

SLY OS (FILTEED)

That's part of the new me. Up early, healthy breakfast, jog a mile before work. But how are you?

ROLAND

Oh, I'm just great, Sly. Never better. Did I hear you say jog?

SLY OS (FILTERED)

You heard right. You're not going to recognize me.

ROLAND

Hmmmm. To what do I owe the honor of this call?

SLY OS (FILTERED)

Oh, ye of the short memory! I have a debt to repay, have you forgotten so soon?

ROLAND

Sly, you don't owe me anything. It would be a sorry world if good

deeds had to be repaid. Now there's a concept; do a good deed, win a million. No, Sly. I don't want anything. Besides, someone else would have come along. I didn't really save your life you know. You weren't hurt that bad.

SLY OS (FILTERED)

Ah, my young friend. You underestimate what you did for me. I think you'll realize that when you see me tonight. Now, what kind of food do you prefer?

ROLAND

It can't come in a Styrofoam container, it can't be delivered by a guy with a big round head, and the restaurant can't have the word fast anywhere in the name. If you're planning on taking me out to dinner, I accept. But no more talk of payment, comprende?

SLY OS (FILTERED)

Certainamente, Senor. My driver will pick you up at seven sharp.

Roland looks at the handset and shakes his head.

ROLAND

OK. Sounds good.

He hangs up, and goes to put on some music. James Brown, of course.

EXT. ROLAND'S APARTMENT - DAY

Roland waits on the street, checks his watch. It reads 6:55.

A long limo pulls up, and Sly leaps out of the back. He has lost at least one hundred pounds since the night of his accident.

He embraces Roland, who stands rather stiffly, accepting but not returning the embrace.

SLY

It's good to see you again, Roland. You're looking well.

ROLAND

I'm looking well? Look at you!

You're looking so much better I can hardly believe it.

Sly steps back and strikes a model's pose.

SLY

Yes! I am looking good, am I not? It is all due to you, my friend.

ROLAND

Come on! You're not supposed to talk about that anymore.

Sly steps in front of Roland. He places both his hands on Roland's upper arms.

SLY

But you're the reason I'm even alive today. After your help that night, I changed. You made me realize I was on a crash course to Hell.

Roland shudders at Sly's familiarity. Sly steps away.

SLY

You may not have physically saved my life that night; you're right, I wasn't injured all that bad. But the effect you had on me, now that's another story.

Sly steps back, showing off his new physique.

SLY

Look at me! I'm fit, healthy and with a new outlook on life. Now, let's go eat.

INT. LIMO - DAY

Roland and Sly enter and sit. They pull away and enter traffic.

SLY

Where to, my friend? Your call.

ROLAND

A sit-down restaurant where a waitress takes your order and serves you. I'm not great on dining out spots, you pick one.

Sly leans forward and slides open the glass separator.

SLY

Applewoods, Melvin, if you please.

He slides the glass shut again.

SLY

I think you'll like this.

ROLAND

I'll like any place. I haven't eaten all day, just anticipating.

Sly laughs, and playfully pokes Roland on the arm.

SLY

It's sort of a Mom and Pop place. The Sheas are friends of mine. The lobster is out of sight.

EXT. 501 ELEVENTH STREET, NYC - NIGHT

Darkness has fallen. The limo arrives, and Roland and Sly exit. Sly speaks briefly with the driver, and the limo pulls away.

The two men enter the restaurant.

INT. APPLEWOODS - NIGHT

Muted lighting greets their eyes. Pale yellow walls catch flickers of light from the fireplace in the center of the room.

A cheerful waitress, middle-aged, modestly plump, (MRS. SHEA) seats them close to the fireplace at a sturdy maple table.

MRS.SHEA

What's your pleasure, gents?

SLY

We'll start with an appetizer, Mrs. Shea. Fresh lobster as usual, I hope.

MRS.SHEA

They were swimming off the coast of Maine this morning. Since it's grilled, may I suggest a good Chardonnay?

SLY

We leave it in your capable hands, ma'am.

MRS. SHEA

I'll put Papa to work.

She retires to the kitchen, returns almost immediately

with the wine and two glasses. She pours, as Sly and Roland watch intently.

SLY

This is my one remaining vice, a little wine with dinner.

ON SCREEN: Later

The table is piled high with dishes, mostly empty. Mrs. Shea is removing them. The men eat their dessert.

SLY

Now, was I right or was I right?

ROLAND

(Laughs) You're right. Never in my life have I eaten as well.

He puts down his spoon and pushes away from the table. Sly does the same.

SLY

I've got a confession, Roland. There is more to my offer of repayment.

ROLAND

Aha! I knew it. It was too good to be true. I've told you before...

Sly interrupts.

SLY

I know, I know. But, my young friend, you've earned more than just a good meal.

Roland shifts around, very uncomfortably.

ROLAND

I really have only one need, and that's to get all this indecision over with.

SLY

That's what I'm talking about. You know, your supervisor, Mr. Mills thinks very highly of you, and he's concerned for you, as am I. Between us, we've secured another vacation for you. You also have a very understanding employer, I might add.

ROLAND

This is unbelievable. I have no time coming, and I can't afford to

miss any work.

SLY

That's all taken care of. You'll be on a leave of absence, with full pay, and your job will be there when you get back.

Roland sighs and shakes his head.

ROLAND

I don't think I can accept this.

SLY

Of course you can. Did I tell you the vacation is a fishing trip to Alaska?

Roland's jaw drops. Sly smiles a big expansive smile.

SLY

Your friends were good enough to tell me your secret wish. I happen to be in a position to make it come true. Come on. I'll tell you all about it on the way home.

They rise and go to the cashier's station. Sly pays the bill, and leaves a fifty dollar tip. Mrs. Shea looks at Sly.

MRS. SHEA

Generous as always, Sly. Thank you so very much. Do come again, won't you?

SLY

I certainly will, and you're welcome. OK, Roland, time to go.

As they leave Applewood's, Sly talks to Roland.

SLY

The story I am about to tell you started a long, long time ago. I was just a lad with no future...

The reach the limo, and enter. It drives away.

ON SCREEN: April 5th, 1976

INT. PRIVATE JET - NIGHT

The interior of the plane is plush. There is a gurney secured in the center. Sheets completely cover the patient, who is attended by four nurses.

The PILOT is heard on the intercom.

PILOT (OS FILTERED)
 We'll be landing in Houston in a few minutes. Prepare yourselves, and remember Mr. Hughes's request. Don't talk to anyone.

EXT. RUNWAY, HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL - NIGHT

A private jet lands, and taxis to the nearly deserted terminal. An ambulance pulls up next to it and parks.

A fork-lift drives up to the plane, and as the door opens the lift raises to meet the gurney as it leaves the plane. When secure, it lowers and the ambulance attendants whisk it away.

INT. HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

Two intent journalists interview a pilot.

JOURNALIST ONE
 You were on a flight from Acapulco and he died enroute?

PILOT
 That's correct. His demise was verified by one of his nurses.

JOURNALIST TWO
 Were you over Mexico or Texas when he died?

PILOT
 That's really hard to determine. Does it make any difference?

JOURNALIST ONE
 When a man as famous as Howard Hughes dies, every detail is important.

Both journalists head for the bank of phones. The pilot watches for a moment, then he too leaves the terminal.

EXT. ROLAND'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The limo carrying Sly and Roland home from the restaurant glides to a stop. As the men exit, Sly is still talking.

SLY
 So now you have the whole story about how I became wealthy.

ROLAND

You have my head spinning. I'd like to accept your offer of the Alaska trip, but...

Sly slaps Roland on the arm.

SLY

But nothing! It's all settled. The limo will pick you up Friday. Be packed and ready to go.

ROLAND

But...But.

SLY

Be ready!

Sly re-enters the limo and it drives away.

INT. LUXURIOUS DWELLING - NIGHT

Sly relaxes by a lighted indoor swimming pool. He wears a robe, with a towel draped around his neck. He is wet.

A phone sits on a table next to where he is sitting on a lounge. He leans over and punches numbers without picking up the handset.

Ringling can be heard, softly, as on a speakerphone. The phone is answered by a VOICE.

VOICE (OS FILTERED)

Hello, Mr. Garth.

SLY

C'mon, Coop. You can call me Sly. I'm glad I caught you home. That fellow I told you about? He's on the way, come Friday. Is his place ready?

VOICE (COOP OS FILTERED)

It sure is. The red carpet is out. By the way, Sly, how are we going to recognize this fellow?

SLY

That should be easy. He'll probably be the only African American with a green suitcase carrying a fishing rod.

COOP (OS FILTERED)

An Afri... a Black guy? What're you doing to us anyway?

Sly visibly tenses. He removes the towel and uses it to dry his hair.

SLY

Doing to you? I don't accept that as a legitimate question, Coop. I told you, I owe this guy.

COOP (OS FILTERED)

What if he accidentally stumbles onto something we don't want him to see? Why didn't you just put him somewhere in Anchorage and let him fish around there?

SLY

Like I said, he's special. Look, if anything happens, I'll be there like sesame seeds on a bun. Quit worrying, will you?

He replaces the towel around his neck.

SLY

Just remember! The red carpet treatment, and ignore the fact he's not white. You owe me, Coop!

He reaches over and punches a button on the phone. He then dives into his pool.

INT. PASSENGER TERMINAL, ANCHORAGE INTERNATIONAL - DAY

A smattering of people wanders through the terminal. Most are sourdough types, a few are Native Americans and Native Alaskans. Some carry weapons, most carry backpacks. In the center stands a nine foot stuffed grizzly bear with bared teeth.

Roland comes in, and immediately his attention is drawn to the bear. He stands looking at it with his mouth wide open. An ANNOUNCER speaks.

ANNOUNCER (OS)

All passengers from Seattle can claim their luggage at the baggage rack. Connecting flights to Fairbanks, Lake Iliamna, and all destinations in Alaska are lined up, ready to go. Exit through gate one, and look for the proper sign.

Roland goes to the baggage rack, and picks up a green suitcase, his rod and reel and tackle box. He exits through gate one and looks around.

A SOURDOUGH notices his confusion.

SOURDOUGH

Where to, son?

ROLAND

I'm heading for Nome, to do a little fishing.

SOURDOUGH

I'd never have guessed. That Twin Otter right there is the one you want. Good luck, but don't get too close to the water. The fish up there will come right out after you.

He points to a maroon colored twin engine airplane, with WEIN AIRLINES painted on the side. Roland walks toward it. An INUIT LADY with two small children follows him. One of her children, a small BOY speaks to her.

BOY

Mama, why is that man's skin black?

INUIT LADY

Hush! That's the way God made him, just like He made us brown. We don't talk about such things.

BOY

Why Mama?

The lady grabs his arm and propels him toward the plane.

INUIT LADY

I said hush! Now get up those stairs.

Roland steps aside and allows them to board first.

ROLAND

It's alright, ma'am. I'm used to it.

INUIT LADY.

I'm very sorry, sir. We don't get to meet many African Americans up here.

Roland struggles up the boarding stairs with his large suitcase, tackle box and fishing pole.

INT. TWIN OTTER - DAY

As Roland enters, the lady and her children are already seated. There are about twenty seats facing the aisle

down both sides of the plane.

INUIT LADY

We saved you a window seat, sir. We thought you might enjoy the scenery. We've made the trip before.

There are no overhead racks, so Roland does as everyone else has done, slides as much of his gear as he can under the seat, and puts his large green suitcase on the floor in front of him. He straps in.

The PILOT enters and makes his way forward.

PILOT

Secure everything you can, folks. We'll be leaving momentarily.

He disappears into the pilot's compartment. One at a time, the engines roar into life, causing the plane to vibrate. It moves forward slowly.

PILOT (OS)

We'll be leaving on the crosswind runway, which means we'll be getting airborne pretty quick. Just hold on to your stomachs.

The plane trundles to the end of the runway. One at a time, the huge engines rev up and back off. After a few moments both engines rev up and the plane lurches forward. After only a short run, it jumps into the air. The Inuit children squeal.

BOY

Whee! Make him do it again, Mommy.

Roland has a grip on his seat, and his eyes are wide open. He has to look over his shoulder to see out his window. There is a large round lake; around its shores are hundreds of small airplanes, all on floats. Roland looks in wonder.

INUIT LADY

That's Lake Hood. It's the largest floatplane base in the world.

ROLAND

That's amazing. Does everyone in Alaska have a plane?

INUIT LADY

Almost. There are a thousand places you can't get to any other way.

The plane rises swiftly, leaving Lake Hood behind. The window scene now features a large mountain range. One

huge snow covered mountain dwarfs the rest.

INUIT LADY

That's Denali. What you folks from outside call McKinley.

ROLAND

Outside?

INUIT LADY

(Laughs) If you're not from Alaska, you're from outside. It's an Alaskan thing.

Roland leans his head back. He snores, gently.

The pilot's voice comes over the intercom.

PILOT (OS FILTERED)

Hang on to your gear, folks. We'll be dropping in at Fairbanks in about ten minutes.

Roland is startled awake.

PILOT (OS FILTERED)

Connecting point for anywhere in Alaska you want to go.

ROLAND

(Yawning) That was refreshing.

A moderately large city is seen through Roland's window. The plane sheds altitude and lands.

EXT. FAIRBANKS INTERNATIONAL - DAY

The Twin Otter taxis to the terminal, and unloads its human cargo.

Roland debarks and stands on the tarmac looking uncertain and carrying all his gear.

The pilot comes down the stairs and walks up to Roland.

PILOT

Where to, son?

ROLAND

Nome, I hope.

PILOT

Oh, that's easy. See that Cessna 207 right over there? He'll be making one stop in Red Devil, then North to Nome. Should be there by dark.

Roland walks toward the plane indicated by the pilot.

ROLAND

The farther north I go, the smaller
the planes get.

Roland checks his watch. He calls back to the pilot who
is walking away.

ROLAND

What time is it, anyway?

PILOT

5:00 PM, friend. Synchronize your
watch.

He smiles and walks away. Roland looks at his watch a
long time, and then, after setting all his gear on the
tarmac, sets his watch.

FLASHBACK ON SCREEN: July 30th, 1975

EXT. BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN - DAY

A restaurant bearing the name RED FOX is in the
background. A nattily dressed MAN, middle aged and
heavy set is talking on a pay phone. He wears a blue
short sleeved shirt and blue trousers. His feet sport
black Gucci loafers.

He hangs up the phone as a maroon 1975 Mercury Marquis
Brougham pulls up. A young red haired youth emerges.

MAN

Chuckie? I wasn't expecting you.
Isn't that Joey Jack's car?

CHUCKIE

Yeah, it is, Uncle Jimmy. Tony Jack
asked me to drive over and tell you
the meeting place has changed. Come
on, I'll take you.

MAN (JIMMY)

Why the change? I don't like this!

CHUCKIE

Nothing for you to fear. I just
think Tony Jack and Tony Pro are a
little leery of this spot. Come on
Uncle Jimmy, they're waiting.

Jimmy goes around and gets in the car. Spinning wheels
and flying gravel marks its departure.

ON SCREEN: The next day

A DETECTIVE and a uniformed COP examine a car.

DETECTIVE

Yeah, it's Jimmy Hoffa's car
alright. Just no Jimmy Hoffa to be
found.

COP

I'll go notify his wife. Wonder
what happened to him? Kidnapped?

END FLASHBACK

INT. CESSNA 207 - DAY

Roland sits in the right front seat. A ground crew
works at loading the plane. The PILOT approaches.

PILOT

We're letting you ride shotgun,
since there's only women and kids
this trip. Have you ever done any
flying?

ROLAND

Not this far forward. What are all
these gauges for?

As people are loading in the back, the rear of the
plane tips back. Roland grabs the yoke.

ROLAND

Hey! What's happening?

PILOT

No sweat. That's how we load.

The loading crew starts to pack the luggage
compartment, between the firewall and the engine.
Slowly, the plane settles back on its landing gear. The
loading CHIEF shuts the compartment door and secures
it.

CHIEF

OK, that's all of it.

The pilot boards and starts the pre-flight procedure.

PILOT

We have to make sure the center of
balance runs right down the center
of the wing, otherwise this bird
doesn't fly right. This baby will
lift all you can pack in, but it's
got to be balanced.

Roland nods his head knowingly.

ROLAND

Makes sense to me.

PILOT

I'll give you a few pointers on how you can help me, since you're second in command.

As the pilot goes through his checklist, he explains what he is doing.

The plane taxis to the end of the runway and takes off.

Hundreds of lakes and meandering rivers dot the landscape.

Roland watches, enthralled.

PILOT

OK, partner. Time for you to earn your keep. I'm going to catch a short nap.

ROLAND

Hold on, "partner!" I wasn't kidding when I said I'd never been this far forward in a plane. I'm no pilot.

The pilot adjusts his seat and leans back.

PILOT

Ever drive a car?

ROLAND

Sure, but...

PILOT

This is easier. We're on automatic pilot. All you have to do is keep us at the right altitude.

He briefly demonstrates, by pushing and pulling on the yoke. The plane rises and dips in response. Roland takes hold of the yoke.

ROLAND

Aren't you supposed to have a license to do this?

PILOT

We'll call it your first lesson.

He settles back into his seat, squirming to get comfortable.

PILOT

Give me about half an hour.

ROLAND

How am I supposed to see those mountains up ahead when it gets dark?

PILOT

(Laughing) You won't have to worry about that until September.

ROLAND

Oh, yeah. I forgot, this is the Land of the Midnight Sun.

All around, out every window, are lakes and rivers, all looking nearly identical. The trees are all evergreen.

PILOT

Try to keep her at 3500 feet. That way we'll be too high to hit anything.

The flight continues, as Roland monitors the altimeter. He manages to keep it fairly close to 3500 feet.

EXT. ROOSEVELT FIELD, NOME - DAY

There is lots of aerial activity, all small planes, mostly tail draggers.

A large, middle aged man, COOP, stands watch.

The Cessna 207 touches down and taxis to the terminal. A crew hurries out to attend the plane and passengers.

Roland exits, and goes to the baggage compartment. As the crew unloads, he retrieves his big green suitcase, tackle box and rod and reel. Coop watches from a short distance away.

COOP

Are you Roland? Over this way.

Roland looks up when he hears his name. A wide grin spreads across his face.

ROLAND

Hello. You must be Cooper.

COOP

Indeed I am, but I prefer just plain Coop.

Roland has to set his tackle box and rod down in order to shake hands.

COOP

Sly said you'd be on this flight.

Follow me, your accommodations
await.

They walk away from the field. Roland has trouble
carrying everything. Coop grabs his tackle box.

COOP

Here, let me give you a hand

ROLAND

Thanks, Coop. I hope I brought what
it takes to catch a few big ones.

COOP

These fish will eat almost anything
you throw at 'em, don't worry.

They approach a fairly late model Ford Bronco. Coop
motions toward it.

COOP

Here's our transportation. For the
few days you're here, consider it
yours.

ROLAND

Wow! I wasn't expecting anything
like this

COOP

It's not much, just something Sly
picked up at a fire-sale. Some big
time football player was in need of
cash, or something like that. Sly
never told us all the particulars.

Roland puts his gear in the back of the Bronco. He
walks around it looking at it.

ROLAND

This is just like the one O.J.
Simpson had during that low-speed
chase he was involved in.

COOP

Yeah, that was his name, I think.

Roland looks surprised. He opens the unlocked passenger
side door and gets in.

ROLAND

You forgot to lock this door when
you got out.

COOP

We don't lock anything around here.
Who would steal it, and if they
did, where would they go with it?

Some of the homes up here don't even have locks on the door.

Coop gets in behind the wheel and they drive off.

INT. BRONCO - DAY

Coop and Roland ride along, through Nome. It doesn't take long. Coop points out places of interest.

COOP

That's City Hall right there, and across the street there is the library.

ROLAND

You guys are more modern than I thought you would be.

COOP

We've got almost the same stuff as anyone else has, just not as much or as big. OK, enjoy the ride Roland. We'll be there in no time.

A street sign proclaims they are on Nome-Council road. Roland's head swivels back and forth as he takes in the sights. He gazes longingly at several beautiful lakes, each time exclaiming.

ROLAND

Bet there's fish in that one!

COOP

There's fish in all of them.

ON SCREEN: Time passes.

The Bronco still travels on Nome-Council Road. Roland's head nods and his eyes blink several times.

ROLAND

Aren't we there yet?

COOP

We're close, buddy. Hang loose.

Roland's head falls all the way down, as he falls asleep. The Bronco turns off Nome-Council, and then makes several more turns before it arrives at a neat backwoods-type lodge. A huge sign hangs from the roof of the porch proclaiming it to be Old Settlers Village. As they pull up, Roland awakens.

ROLAND

Is this it? Hey, this looks great!

COOP

We like it. It was actually the second piece of property I bought after arriving here.

A Land Rover pulls in the same driveway, but does not drive all the way forward. The driver (Jimmy Hoffa) watches the action. Coop looks in his direction, and nods. He follows Roland inside.

INT. OLD SETTLERS VILLAGE - DAY

The interior is breathtakingly beautiful. Many stuffed animals are in various poses of attack or submission.

Above them all, above the back bar is a huge bald eagle with wings outspread. Roland stares in awe. He sets his suitcase, tackle box and rod down.

ROLAND

This was your second purchase? What was the first?

COOP

That's not important. I want you to meet TWO BEARS, the resident manager and handyman.

A huge Native American with a severely scarred face enters from the back. He is even taller than Roland.

COOP

You fellows get acquainted. My ride's here. Good luck with the fishing, Roland. Here are the keys to the Bronco.

He tosses the keys to Roland, who catches them while shaking hands with Two Bears.

TWO BEARS

If you'll follow me, sir.

Roland picks up his tackle box and rod, as Two Bears grabs the suitcase. They go down a hall and enter a large room.

INT. ROLAND'S ROOM - DAY

It is a beautifully appointed room. On a center table sits a huge splay of flowers. A full size refrigerator sits near a king sized bed. A mosquito net is suspended on a frame above the bed. The men set down their loads.

ROLAND

Wow! Sly sure knows how to throw a

vacation.

He opens the 'fridge. It is well stocked with various meats and cheeses, even a bottle of bubbly.

TWO BEARS

There are towels in the bathroom,
in case you want to get rid of the
travel dust.

He turns to leave.

ROLAND

How'd you happen to get the name
Two Bears?

TWO BEARS

Because in my lifetime I have only
been attacked by two bears. They
are both now dead.

ROLAND

You've shot and killed two bears?
That's amazing.

Two Bears smiles slightly.

TWO BEARS

I do not shoot guns. Knives are
much quieter.

Roland's eyes grow wide, as he looks at Two Bears, who leaves the room.

Roland explores. He discovers a tape deck, and activates it. James Brown is heard, and Roland grins broadly.

ROLAND

Yes, indeed! Sly sure knows how to
throw a vacation.

INT. JIMMY'S LAND ROVER - DAY

Jimmy and Coop drive away from the lodge. The atmosphere is definitely frosty.

JIMMY

What in the world is Sly up to? If
this guy discovers something he
shouldn't see..

Coop interrupts with a wave of his hand.

COOP

He just came up here to fish. I
scoped him out pretty well; I don't

think he'll be a problem. Sly trusts him, guess we'll have to trust him too.

JIMMY

One of these days, Sly is going to go too far.

INT. ROLAND'S ROOM - DAY

Roland exits his shower, glistening wet, with a large towel wrapped around him. James Brown tunes are still playing. He goes to the 'fridge and finds a jar of pickles. He removes one and starts eating it.

His watch sits on the table next to the flowers. He puts it on, and checks the time.

He shakes his wrist and puts it up to his ear.

ROLAND

Still running. Eleven o'clock? It's still light out. Wonder how people manage to sleep around here?

He steps into his bathroom briefly, and returns wearing trousers and pulling a polo shirt over his head.

ROLAND

No sense in wasting good daylight. May as well get in a little fishing.

EXT. OLD SETTLER'S VILLAGE - DAY

Roland exits, wearing hip waders and carrying his rod and reel in his right hand and his tackle box in his left. Two Bears sits on the huge porch, rocking, smoking a pipe.

ROLAND

Where's the best place to get my line wet?

Two Bears points with the stem of his pipe.

TWO BEARS

Right through the woods, about a quarter of a mile is a small lake. You won't need the waders, though. You don't dare get that close, or the pike will be hunting you.

Roland laughs, but does not take off the waders. He starts in the direction Two Bears indicated, then stops and looks back.

ROLAND

Were you pulling my leg about
killing two bears?

TWO BEARS

When you came through Anchorage you
probably saw the first one in the
terminal. The second one is a rug
in Sly's mansion, outside.

Roland emits a small laugh.

ROLAND

I understand "outside."

He continues through the woods.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - DAY

Roland approaches the "small" lake. It's roughly four
hundred acres, with spruce trees crowding the shore the
entire circumference of the lake.

Roland sets the tackle box down, opens it and removes a
large plug. He installs it on his rod and reel, steps
into the water, and casts toward the middle. Almost
immediately, his rod bends double, almost pulling
Roland into the lake.

After a lively battle, Roland pulls a huge Northern
Pike up on the shore, by walking out of the water, his
rod bent at an alarming angle.

He detaches the fish, puts it on a large stringer,
anchors it to a tree and puts the fish back in the
water.

He casts once again, with identical results. A huge
smile plays on Roland's face.

EXT. TRAIL FROM LAKE TO LODGE - DAY

Roland struggles back toward the lodge with all his
gear and a huge string of Northern Pike. He is met by
Two Bears.

TWO BEARS

Here, sir, let me give you a hand.

ROLAND

Great, thank you. How'd you know I
was on the way back?

Two Bears grabs the string of fish.

TWO BEARS

There are ten hooks on your stringer. I knew how long it would take you to fill them.

ROLAND

You're full of surprises. Is there a place in the lodge to clean these beauties?

TWO BEARS

Of course.

They approach the rear of the lodge. There is a huge table as well as a sink and a hand pump. Two Bears flops the string of fish onto the table, produces a knife and guts one of the fishes. He does not remove the head, but grabs it by the gill and washes it while pumping water with the hand pump.

ROLAND

I can handle it from here.

Two Bears nods, and takes the fish he cleaned as he goes back into the lodge.

TWO BEARS

I will fix this one for your breakfast.

ROLAND

Breakfast?

He checks his watch.

ROLAND

Good grief! It's almost six AM. It really doesn't get dark around here does it?

TWO BEARS

Not this time of year, sir. Breakfast in about twenty minutes. By the way, sir, it would be prudent to be alert for bears. They love fish, especially ones they don't have to catch.

Roland cleans the fish, quite often scanning the area. The smile does not leave his face.

INT. LODGE - DAY

Roland sits at a table in the kitchen. In front of him is a plate of fish bones. Two Bears is cleaning.

ROLAND

Outstanding! How do you fix it to make it taste so good?

TWO BEARS

Grilled over charcoal made from native woods. Pike is a staple food of my people. I'm glad you enjoyed it.

ROLAND

You've been up all night. When do you sleep?

TWO BEARS

Time enough for that when the sun leaves us for three months. You might not like Alaska as much then.

Roland pushes away from the table.

ROLAND

I don't think I'll ever dislike an area where the fishing is this good.

He stands up and stretches.

ROLAND

If I wanted to send some fish to my friends, what would be the best way?

TWO BEARS

If they are packed in salt, they will keep, but the quickest way is to take them into Nome, and have them packed in dry ice. UPS will ship them with a guaranteed delivery time.

ROLAND

So how do I get back to the road to Nome?

TWO BEARS

Just take the road most traveled until you come to Nome-Council. From there it's a snap.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE LODGE - DAY

Roland and Two Bears stand beside the white bronco. Two Bears holds a large box. Roland walks around the vehicle.

ROLAND

Was this really OJ's Bronco? The one in that low-speed chase?

TWO BEARS

It was, indeed, Mr. Simpson's vehicle. However, the chase to which you refer took place in Mr. Al Cowling's Bronco, which was identical to this one.

ROLAND

Hey, that's right. I'd almost forgotten. Say, do you know the difference between O.J. Simpson and John Elway?

A quizzical look crosses Two Bears face. He shakes his head no, slowly.

ROLAND

O.J. drove a slow white Bronco. Elway was a slow white Bronco.

Two Bears does not change expression. Roland shrugs his shoulders.

ROLAND

Guess you had to be there. So, I follow the most used roads out of here to Nome-Council, and from there into Nome, right?

TWO BEARS

Correct.

Roland enters the Bronco. Two Bears puts the box on the seat next to Roland and steps back. Roland's fishing gear is on the back seat.

TWO BEARS

The salt will keep them fresh until you get there. I'll see you when you get back.

Roland drives away.

INT. WHITE BRONCO - DAY

Roland drives, whistling to James Brown, courtesy of a tape deck.

He approaches a stop sign and stops. Across the large road in front of him is a sign, "Nome-Council." An arrow with a point on each end is underneath the wording.

ROLAND

OK, here's the main drag. I would have thought Nome was to the right, but that sign... I wonder.

Roland reaches in his pocket and removes a coin. He flips it, catching it in the air and slaps it on his forearm.

ROLAND

That settles it. When in doubt, take a wild guess.

He pulls away to the left.

EXT. WHITE BRONCO - DAY

- A) Roland drives past a small stream.
- B) The Bronco slides to a stop, and backs up. Roland jumps out and walks down to the creek bank. He bends over and peers into the water. He runs back to the Bronco and grabs his gear. He goes back to the stream and casts.
- C) Roland fights a fish, and finally lands a gorgeous steelhead. He unhooks it, and releases it.
- D) He returns to the Bronco, a huge smile on his face.

He continues the drive.

He approaches a small lake, fishes a bit, catches a lake trout, and releases it.

Roland drives, alternately humming and whistling to James Brown.

The road narrows, and becomes rocky, and then a tall chain link fence blocks the way. A well used walking path leads to the left, following the fence.

ROLAND

Oh, oh! I should have listened when I told myself Nome was to the right. Good thing I've got plenty of time.

He gets out of the Bronco and goes to the fence. He looks in both directions, and then goes back to the Bronco.

He takes out the rod and reel, as well as the tackle box and walks up the path.

ROLAND

If I find a lake or a creek up this trail, the trip won't have been wasted.

It's a long trail. Roland walks and walks, stopping occasionally to mop his forehead and shoo mosquitoes.

There is a huge lake on the other side of the fence, which Roland stops to admire.

ROLAND

There's what I'm looking for.

He puts his hands on the fence, and a buzzing sound is heard.

ROLAND

Whoops! That's an alarm if I ever heard one. Who in the world needs an alarm way out here in the woods?

He takes a few more steps and there is a gate. On the edge of the lake can now be seen a house. He walks up to the gate, which is padlocked.

He continues to peer through the fence and the gate. From a short distance away, a man approaches.

FLASHBACK

EXT. HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL - NIGHT

The forklift removes the gurney and drives away. A portable stairway pulls up to the door. The pilot leaves the plane and walks toward the terminal.

An elderly man exits, helped by an ATTENDANT. They reach the bottom of the steps.

ATTENDANT

Over this way, Mr. Hughes. Everyone has their story ready, you'll be reported as dead tomorrow. Sly fixed everything.

They enter a limo parked not far from the plane.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. GATE IN LONG FENCE - DAY

The man, HOWARD, reaches the gate. He is elderly, dressed well, with clean clothes if somewhat outdated. His fingernails look like they have never been cut. He and Roland look at each other suspiciously.

HOWARD

Can I help you? You're obviously lost. No one ever comes here.

Roland appears startled.

ROLAND

I'm sorry; I was just admiring your lake. I'm up here on a fishing vacation. Any chance of my wetting a line?

Howard looks at him with a great deal of suspicion. He is hesitant.

HOWARD

I don't know, only the residents have ever fished here before.

ROLAND

Residents? You're not here alone then.

HOWARD

Oh, my, no. There is an entire village here. But we never have visitors.

Roland looks perplexed. He shifts his weight back and forth between both feet.

ROLAND

That sounds like a definite no. I guess I just walked about a hundred miles for nothing.

HOWARD

A hundred miles? My goodness! Where did you start from?

Roland laughs and starts to adjust his load, prepares to leave.

ROLAND

Actually I parked down where the fence crosses the road.

HOWARD

Oh. That's only six miles.

He starts to walk away.

ROLAND

Guess it only seemed like a hundred miles. I'm going to recommend to Sly that he put GPS in that Bronco.

HOWARD

Sly? Did I hear you say Sly?

Roland stops and turns.

ROLAND

It's only due to Sly's generosity that I'm on vacation up here. Are you friends with him?

HOWARD

Oh, this puts an entirely different spin on things.

He paces back and forth on his side of the fence.

HOWARD

If you'll come back tomorrow, I'll unlock the gate. I'll need some time to check on a couple of things.

ROLAND

I'll be back. I should get to Nome before it closes anyway. Even fish that are salted aren't going to last forever.

Roland gets a good grip on his gear, and hurries back down the trail.

INT. SLY'S MANSION (BEDROOM) NIGHT

Sly is sprawled out on a king-size bed. The phone rings. Sly does not move.

It rings again. This time Sly stirs a little. By the time it rings for the fourth time, Sly appears about half awake.

He picks up the hand set and mumbles into it.

SLY

Hello?

An unintelligible, frantic voice can be heard. Sly listens for a moment.

SLY

Whoa, slow down a little. (pause)
He went *where*? (pause) Oh, great!
OK, I'll be on the next flight.

He hangs up and flops back on the bed. A couple of seconds pass, and he gets out of bed and starts getting dressed.

INT. OLD SETTLER'S LODGE - DAY

Two Bears sits behind the bar. There are two customers eating at a table. Roland walks in.

TWO BEARS

You've been gone all day. Did you find everything all right?

ROLAND

I'll say! I went the wrong way the first time, but I made it back.

TWO BEARS

How far did you go the wrong way?

ROLAND

All the way to where there's a fence across the road. Did you know there's a village up that trail by the fence? A nice lake, too. I'm going back tomorrow and do some fishing.

Two Bears is silent for a long time, as he studies Roland.

TWO BEARS

Who told you that you could fish there?

ROLAND

He never told me his name. Some guy with the longest fingernails I've ever seen.

TWO BEARS

That would be Howard. It's odd that he gave you permission; the lake isn't his.

Roland sits at the bar, and accepts a glass of water set there by Two Bears.

ROLAND

Well, I left my gear in the Bronco, and as soon as I get some shuteye, I'm going back and get a stringer of fish.

INT. ROLAND'S ROOM - DAY

Roland comes out of his bathroom, clad in a bathrobe. With a huge smile, he crashes on the huge bed. Soon, he snores gently.

As he sleeps, Sly enters and sits in the recliner. He

watches Roland curiously.

ON SCREEN: -A long nap later-

Sly still sits in the recliner. Roland stirs, stretches and sits up. He looks at Sly, and a huge grin spreads across his face.

ROLAND

Sly! Good to see you. What brings you to God's country? This vacation was the best idea you've ever had.

Sly continues to watch Roland. He leans back and clasps his hands behind his head.

SLY

I hear you took a wrong turn yesterday.

ROLAND

Yes, I thought I was heading to Nome. But I found a couple of great fishing spots, one that I'm going back to today.

Sly stirs uncomfortably.

SLY

That's what I need to talk to you about. Those folks in the village, Howard and the others, they are private people, my friends. I don't wasn't them bothered.

ROLAND

How would I be bothering them, with just a little fishing? That looks like an amazing lake.

Sly stands and goes to stand directly in front of Roland.

SLY

It is an amazing lake. It is fed by underground springs, which also furnish those folks with their drinking water. Anyone fishing there has to be extremely careful, so as not to contaminate the water.

ROLAND

You have my word, I'll be careful.

SLY

I know you will, Roland.

He turns to leave, stops and faces Roland again.

SLY

Just remember, the springs are glacier-fed, probably the purest water in the world. Some even say it's the reason people live way past one hundred years around there. They never get sick.

Two Bears enters the room. A slight smile plays on his face.

TWO BEARS

I've packed a lunch for your fishing trip today.

SLY

That's the way to stay on top of things. I want to make sure Roland has the best of everything.

He shakes Roland's hand, and turns once again to leave.

SLY

See you when you get back to the Big City. Have fun, but be careful.

He leaves the lodge.

EXT. GATE IN FENCE - DAY

Roland stands at the gate, looking through it toward the lake. Howard approaches, holding a key on a large ring. He smiles at Roland as he unlocks the gate.

HOWARD

The fish are waiting for you, young friend. There's no limit, but please don't take more than you need.

- A) Roland casts into the lake. Almost immediately, he gets a bite.
- B) Roland pulls a huge fish up onto the shore, dislodges the lure and puts it on a stringer.
- C) From a small copse of birch trees, a shadowy figure watches, as Roland lands another one.

FLASHBACK:

INT. MARILYN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marilyn, eyes open but unseeing, lies in her bed, the telephone handset swinging. A siren is heard approaching.

Two men dressed in black enter the room. Between them they carry another figure, which they place in bed beside Marilyn.

One man picks Marilyn up, and carries her out. The sound of the ambulance is louder.

EXT. MARILYN'S MANSION - NIGHT

The ambulance sits by the portico, lights flashing. Two attendants exit, rolling a gurney.

They secure the gurney in the ambulance and drive away.

Just seconds after the ambulance disappears, the two men in black exit. Marilyn is being supported between them, groggy but alive.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. LAKE - DAY

The FIGURE in the copse of trees moves forward to where Roland stands, at lake's edge.

Roland looks up.

ROLAND

Well, good afternoon, or good morning, it's hard to tell which with the sun always up there.

FIGURE

I think its still morning, but almost lunch time. You must be the Roland we've heard so much about.

Roland reels in and hooks his lure on one of the eyes on his pole, fisherman style.

ROLAND

Lunch time, eh? No wonder I'm hungry. Yes, I'm Roland, and you would be...?

FIGURE (NORMA JEAN/MARILYN)

I'm Norma Jean. And I'm hungry too. Could I interest you in some lunch?

Roland looks long and hard at Norma Jean, as he fumbles with his fishing gear.

ROLAND

Invitation accepted. You sure look familiar, almost like I should know you from somewhere.

NORMA JEAN

(Laughs) I get that a lot. It's a great pick-up line. Well, come on! And bring your fish. You may as well make a contribution.

Roland closes his tackle box, picks it up and follows Norma Jean. He appears almost sheepish.

ROLAND

That wasn't meant as a pick-up line. You really do look familiar.

They approach a magnificent dwelling.

NORMA JEAN

C'mon in. This is where I hang my hat.

INT. NORMA JEAN'S HOME - DAY

The two enter. It is a beautiful home, with many pictures of film stars, posted prominently. Roland is enthralled, looks around at the room and its fine furnishings.

ROLAND

These are some great digs. Do you know all these people?

NORMA JEAN

Most of them. Now, clean those fish while I whip us up a salad. Do you like your fish fried in cornmeal?

They move toward the kitchen.

ROLAND

Oh, yes.

He goes to the sink and starts to clean the fish. Norma Jean starts building the salad.

EXT. NORMA JEAN'S HOME - DAY

Norma Jean and Roland exit into a beautiful garden.

ROLAND

Thank you, Norma Jean. That was delicious.

NORMA JEAN

Glad you enjoyed it. I don't have company very often, so it was a treat for me too.

She takes Roland by the arm.

NORMA JEAN

Let me show you around the
community, Roland. The fish will
still be there.

They walk away, with Norma Jean pointing at various
points of interest.

They pass a home with a large collection of tractors,
all makes and models, old and completely restored. An
elderly African American gentleman walks among them
with a chamois, wiping them carefully.

He has a thick thatch of reddish but graying hair as
well as a gray mustache and beard. He looks up as Norma
Jean and Roland approach.

NORMA JEAN

This would be Redd's home.

FLASHBACK:

ON SCREEN: Oct 11th, 1991

INT. SET OF "THE ROYAL FAMILY" TV SERIES - DAY

REDD FOXX and DELLA REESE stand to one side and talk.
Redd suddenly grabs his chest, mumbles, and falls.

REDD

I'm coming, Elizabeth.

DELLA

C'mon, Redd, we've all seen that
schtick before. (Pause) Redd? REDD!
Someone get over here, call an
ambulance!

Several cast members approach, and ease Redd into a
comfortable position. An ambulance siren screams to a
stop just outside, and a litter crew rushes in. They
place him on a litter and remove him.

The siren outside sounds off again, receding as the
ambulance leaves.

From a dark corner of the set, a figure stands,
watching as the cast members console each other.

DELLA

The IRS was all over his case.
That's probably why he had a heart
attack.

A stray beam of light shines on the figure in the

corner. It is Redd. He chuckles softly.

REDD

Now, let's see if they can collect sixteen billion dollars from a dead man.

END FLASHBACK:

Roland and Redd stand and look at each other. Roland seems perplexed.

ROLAND

I know you. But you're dead!

REDD

A lot of people have made that mistake. (quickly) Thinking they know me, I mean.

ROLAND

Well, whoever you are, you're obviously not dead. Whoeee! This is one strange place. Who lives over there?

Roland points to a huge mansion that is barely visible in the distance.

NORMA JEAN

Oh, that's where King lives.

ROLAND

If I walk over there and see Martin Luther King working in his garden, I'm going to be visiting a head-doctor.

Norma Jean holds Roland's arm.

NORMA JEAN

Don't go there. He really needs his privacy. We sort of leave him alone. I've got lots of other places to show you.

Roland relaxes.

ROLAND

This is one strange place, I tell you.

Norma Jean and Roland continue their walk. They pass by a small graveyard.

ROLAND

Who's in there?

NORMA JEAN

Well, honestly, Roland! Nobody lives forever.

Roland walks away from Norma Jean and approaches the largest tombstone. It reads "Aunt Amelia." There are no dates on the stone.

ROLAND

Aunt Amelia. Amelia who? And when did she die?

Norma Jean fidgets slightly.

NORMA JEAN

Oh, she was a lady who was a prisoner of war of the Japanese during World War II. She came here right after. She was a pilot, set lots of records for lady pilots. She used to tell us the greatest stories.

Roland continues to wander.

ROLAND

Here's another one with no dates, Joseph L. Barrow. Now, why does that name sound familiar?

NORMA JEAN

He was a boxer, I think. Maybe even a champion. They tell me he came here to keep from being hounded for taxes.

Roland looks perplexed. He goes from grave to grave, then back again. He scratches his head, shakes it, and scratches it again.

ROLAND

This is going to take some figuring out. Maybe a little more fishing... Yeah! That's it! I can think better when I'm fishing.

Roland goes to the lake's edge and casts. His line is almost immediately struck, but he appears not to notice. The line plays out rapidly.

ROLAND

Oops! Guess I'd better pay attention.

EXT. BRONCO - DAY

Roland loads a huge mess of fish into the Bronco.

He turns and waves at Norma Jean.

ROLAND

Thanks for the help. I'll see you
later.

Norma Jean returns the wave, and turns back up the
path.

Roland enters and drives away.

EXT. LODGE - DAY

Two Bears sits on the porch smoking his pipe as Roland
approaches in the Bronco. Roland exits.

ROLAND

I've got a few more to send south.
I'll take 'em out back and clean
'em and get 'em salted down.

TWO BEARS

I'll give you a hand.

EXT. NOME UPS STORE - DAY

The Bronco approaches and stops. Roland exits.

He wrestles the box from the back and takes it into the
store.

INT. NOME UPS STORE - DAY

A CLERK, a huge Native Alaskan,, watches as Roland
struggles with the box. He sets it on the counter.

CLERK

Back again, eh? Same as before?

ROLAND

Close. But make four equal
shipments. Here are the addresses.

He hands the clerk a piece of paper.

ROLAND

Make sure they stay frozen the
whole trip.

CLERK

Certainly, sir.

With ease, he picks up the box and goes into the back
room.

EXT. NOME PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Roland drives the Bronco into the parking lot and parks. He enters the library.

INT. NOME PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Roland sits at a computer, punching the keyboard. He reads, nods, reads some more.

Several times he nods his head knowingly. He continues to operate the machine.

Finally he sits back in the chair, a satisfied look on his face. He mumbles to himself.

ROLAND

Just as I figured. That whole town
is full of dead people!

- A) Roland winds down his vacation. He packs his big green suitcase.
- B) He lugs it to the lobby, along with his tackle box and prized rod and reel.
- C) He shakes hands with Two Bears.

ROLAND

I'm leaving my tackle box and
fishing pole with you. I won't need
them anymore.

TWO BEARS

But sir...

ROLAND

No, really. While this was a
wonderful trip, it hasn't changed
my mind about anything. Besides,
I've got a whole new plan for my
life. I have information that will
mean a fortune for me.

As Roland turns to leave the lodge, Coop enters. He goes to stand in front of Roland.

COOP

Now wait up here, Roland. I
couldn't help overhearing that last
bit. Sly went all out for you. Are
you just discounting that? Didn't
what he did for you count for
anything?

Two Bears goes to stand beside Coop. His look is unsmiling.

ROLAND

I'll always remember his generosity. I could never have afforded this trip on my own. But I'd never be able to afford it again, either. I've decided if I'm going to live, I'm going to live large. There are people willing to pay good money for the information I have.

Coop sighs and takes Roland's bag.

COOP

That's going to disappoint Sly no end. But come on, you've got a plane to catch. I'm sure Sly will want to talk to you about this.

They leave, and go to the Bronco outside. Silently, they load up. They drive away. After he watches them leave, Two Bears goes to the phone.

INT. BRONCO - DAY

Coop drives along the road to Nome, as Roland watches the scenery go by.

COOP

Maybe if you could have stayed longer, things would have smoothed out for you.

ROLAND

We'll never know, will we? I wonder if they'll let me fly the plane going back?

- A) They arrive at Roosevelt airfield, and unload.
- B) The crew loads the Cessna 207. Coop and Roland watch.
- C) Coop and Roland shake hands, and Roland boards the plane.
- D) The plane departs.

INT. CESSNA 207 - DAY

Roland sits in the seat directly behind the PILOT. The co-pilot's seat is occupied by a LADY.

ROLAND

I could learn to like this flying bit. Coming up, the guy let me fly.

PILOT

It would be kind of hard from where you're sitting. Anyway, I've got a co-pilot, as you can see.

ROLAND

You're a pilot?

LADY

Yep! For twenty years now.

EXT. FAIRBANKS AIRPORT - DAY

The 207 lands and taxis to unloading area.

Roland's bag comes out of the plane, and Roland retrieves it.

He boards a Wein Airlines Twin Otter.

INT. ROLAND'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

An exhausted Roland staggers in and flops on the couch.

INT. REESE FURNITURE (TIME CLOCK) - DAY

Walter Mills stands, arms folded. Roland enters, just as the clock hits 8:00 AM. A huge smile crosses Walter's face.

WALTER

Well, well, well! Look who's back, on time and ready for work. Welcome back, Roland. Good to see you.

ROLAND

I'll have to admit, I'd rather still be in Nome feeding the fish.

WALTER

Next year, my boy. Oh, those fish got here in great shape. You'll have to come by the house and see what my wife does with them. Yum!

Roland punches in, just as MR. REESE comes out of his office.

MR. REESE

I thought I heard a familiar voice. Welcome back, and thanks for those fine fish.

ROLAND

You're welcome, Mr. Reese. I

couldn't possibly eat them all
myself.

Roland goes back to the loading dock, and is greeted by several employees, among them his partner.

Under the good natured ribbing of their friends, Roland and Jake go to work loading their van.

- A) They enter the van and drive off.
- B) They make a delivery and return to the warehouse.
- C) They repeat the procedure.

EXT. REESE'S WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Roland leaves and goes to the subway.

INT. ROLAND'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Roland enters and flips on a light. He activates a James Brown tape, and then goes into his bathroom.

As the shower is heard, the door opens and Sly enters. He listens for a moment at the bathroom door, and then sits on the couch.

Roland enters from the bathroom wearing a large terrycloth towel. He goes straight to the tape-player, changes tapes, and as he notices Sly, a wide grin breaks over his face.

He extends his hand.

ROLAND

Hey, Sly! I figured you'd be around soon. I just want you to know that was the greatest vacation ever.

Sly is very serious. It takes him a full two or three seconds to accept Roland's hand.

SLY

I'm glad you enjoyed it. But I've had a couple of very disturbing phone calls. I hope you're not planning on what I'm afraid you're planning.

ROLAND

Hey! The information I've got is valuable. That village has got people who are supposed to have been dead for years. I can get rich.

Sly backs away from Roland, deadly serious.

SLY

Don't do it, Roland. Those folks have been through enough. And they're under my protection.

Roland becomes defensive.

ROLAND

You said before that you owed me. So what is the problem with my making a few bucks?

SLY

Some of those folks could be in trouble with the tax man. Is your making a few bucks as important as their privacy?

Sly takes on a real serious demeanor.

SLY

Don't do it Roland. I insist on your discretion. I mean it! I have ways of stopping you.

Sly abruptly ends the meeting. He goes to the door.

SLY

I'm warning you. Don't do it!

He slams the door as he leaves.

Roland paces. A puzzled look shows on his face.

He finally grabs a phone book and starts to leaf through it. He goes to the phone and dials.

ROLAND

I need to speak to one of your star reporters.

VOICE (OS FILTERED)

All our representatives are busy with other clients at this time. Please leave your name and number and we will return your call in the order in which it was received.

ROLAND

Phooey!

He hangs up. He goes back to the phone book and looks further. He dials again.

ROLAND

Hello. Am I speaking to a real

person? Good! I have information that will be of great interest to you. Hey! Don't hang up on me! Why, you turkey!

He hangs up.

He puts on a sweater and leaves his apartment.

INT. NATIONAL ENQUIRER - DAY

People bustle around. Several people use telephones.

Roland steps through the door. No one pays any attention to him.

A GOPHER walks by carrying a sheaf of papers.

ROLAND

Hey, buddy! How do you get to talk to somebody around here?

GOPHER

Got an appointment?

ROLAND

If I had an appointment, would I have asked you that?

He looks Roland up and down.

GOPHER

Guess not. See that lady right over there.

He points to a desk in the far corner. A pretty African American woman sits there, seemingly unoccupied.

Roland threads his way through the bustling melee and approaches her desk.

As he nears her desk, he sees it is Lucinda.

ROLAND

Well, hello...again!

LUCINDA

Do I know you?

She looks Roland over, and a glint of recognition dawns.

LUCINDA

Yes! I do know you. What do you want? What are you doing here? I don't have any TVs for you to steal.

The tips of Roland's ears redden.

ROLAND

I *am* sorry about that. But I really had no choice.

LUCINDA

Well, we'll consider it water under the bridge. Now, what's your problem?

ROLAND

Are you really a reporter? Because if you are, I've got the story of a lifetime for you.

Lucinda rocks back in her chair. She contemplates Roland for a few seconds. Roland sits down.

LUCINDA

I'm a reporter in search of a story. I just hired on here, and I'm not sure these people think I can cut it. So, Roland, wasn't it? What's the earth shaking story you have that will make my day?

Roland rocks back in his chair. He looks smug.

ROLAND

I think you're going to like this. Can we go somewhere and talk?

Lucinda rises and motions for Roland to follow.

LUCINDA

Hope you're right. C'mon, it's lunch time anyway.

Roland rises and follows Lucinda out the door

INT. WHITE TOWER - DAY

Lucinda and Roland sit at a table, full of plastic containers.

LUCINDA

What you're telling me is incredulous. If I were to write it, no one would believe it.

ROLAND

You bosses can afford it. Ask them to send you to Nome. I can explain exactly how to get there.

He looks pleadingly at her.

ROLAND

I know it'll be worth your time.

LUCINDA

You realize, if I flop, it's my job.

ROLAND

You're my only hope.

Across the room, behind a newspaper, a beady eyed man watches.

Lucinda and Roland leave the restaurant. The man goes to the phone.

INT. REESE FURNITURE WAREHOUSE - DAY

Roland and Jake stack furniture, load some in trucks.

A whistle blows.

JAKE

It's about time. It's been a long day.

ROLAND

You got that right.

The employees stream by the time clock and punch out. Walter watches. Roland and Jake punch out and leave.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE REESE'S - NIGHT

Jake walks to the right, Roland to the left. Roland approaches the subway entrance.

The MAN from White Tower sidles up close to Roland. He has his hand in his pocket and pokes Roland with it.

MAN

Don't give me any trouble. I've got a gun.

ROLAND

What do you want, man? My wallet is in my pocket, but there's not much money in it.

The man gestures down the street.

MAN

I'm not after your money. Sly has a message for you.

He pushes Roland away from the subway entrance and down

the street.

They approach an alley, and the man gestures for Roland to go there.

A huge black limo is parked there, and the man points at it.

MAN

Get in.

ROLAND

This looks familiar. Sly's?

MAN

Yes. Now get in.

Roland enters to complete darkness.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

The limo pulls out of the alley into the light. Sitting next to Roland on the jump seat is the man who abducted him.

On the back seat with his face in shadow is a man dressed in a white suit. It is sequined, and the dim light causes them to sparkle.

Roland looks at the driver as they pass under a streetlight. It is Two Bears.

ROLAND

Hey! I know you! What are you doing here, and what are you trying to pull?

TWO BEARS

Yes, little friend, it is I. The question should be, what are you trying to pull?

ROLAND

I'm only looking out for number one. Sly says he owes me, so why not let me wet my beak a bit?

The figure on the back seat leans forward and gets his face right up close to Roland. It is ELVIS.

ELVIS

Because you want to wet your beak in someone's water, son.

Roland looks incredulous. His mouth drops open.

ROLAND

You're... you're... you're *dead!* At least you're supposed to be.

ELVIS

Yes. I'm supposed to be dead. But actually, I'm alive and well, living in *Alive, Alaska.*

He settles back in his seat, and as the light flickers on and off his face, he grins.

ELVIS

I saw you as Norma Jean was giving you the grand tour. I sort of wondered why you didn't come in. You know, the big house right on the lake.

Roland shakes his head repeatedly, as if clearing it.

ROLAND

You mean, when she said "King" she meant you, not MLK Jr.? Oh, man! This is confusing. Does that mean all those people who claim they've seen you are right?

ELVIS

About half of 'em. I'm sort of an emissary for Sly, when something happens he can't handle himself. Like now.

Elvis settles back in his seat. The grin fades from his face.

ELVIS

We *will* stop you, you know. We've already silenced your little friend from the Enquirer. Here, read this.

He hands a newspaper to Roland. Glaring headline reads, "Reporter's car jumps blocks on ferry, sinks." The story continues, "Lucinda Bronson, reporter for the Enquirer, apparently drowned when her car inexplicably jumped the blocks on the Staten Island Ferry and sank. Divers have recovered the car, but her body has not yet been found."

Roland reads, looks up and hands the paper back to Elvis.

ROLAND

But why? She never did anything to you.

ELVIS

We in Alive cherish our status. If anything happens to threaten it, well...

ROLAND

Sly knows full well how I feel about things. Threatening to kill me doesn't faze me all that much. But I was just starting to like that girl.

The limo stops. Roland looks out the window. They are outside his apartment.

ROLAND

Are you just going to let me go?

ELVIS

Sure, for now. But Three Bears will be in touch soon.

As he leaves the limo, Roland does a double take.

ROLAND

Three Bears? You mean...?

ELVIS

Yep! Happened right after you left to come back outside. Lots of things have happened. We took care of the road that led to the fence. It stops ten miles away now, and it's swampy.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Roland stands and watches as the limo drives away. He is approached by ERNIE BIGGS, a street person.

ERNIE

Hey, Roland. Long time no see. Where ya been?

ROLAND

Hi, Ernie. I've been on vacation. Everything OK with you?

Ernie shifts his feet and mumbles.

ERNIE

Not too bad. Check's late again this month, though.

Roland pulls out his wallet and extracts a ten spot.

ROLAND

I've got a little job for you, if you're up to it.

ERNIE

Yeah, man. I'm all over that action. What is it you need?

ROLAND

I'm going up and go to bed. If anyone comes around that doesn't belong, let me know right away. OK?

ERNIE

You got it, boss!

Ernie walks away as Roland goes in his apartment.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Ernie enters, secures a bottle of Thunderbird and carries it to the counter.

The clerk puts it in a paper bag, snags the ten and makes change.

Ernie leaves.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ROLAND'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ernie settles down in a doorway, in view of Roland's.

He takes a long pull on the bottle of Thunderbird.

His eyes close.

ON SCREEN: -Later that night-

Ernie appears to be sound asleep. A tremendous explosion takes place across the street. Fire pours out the windows, black smoke curls upward. Ernie does not move.

Fire trucks arrive on the scene, and fight the fire. They do not make much of an impact on it.

ON SCREEN -The next morning-

The building that contained Roland's apartment is rubble. Wisps of smoke still rise from it. A residual fire crew still monitors it, occasionally hitting a hot spot with water.

INT. MR. REESE'S OFFICE - DAY

Several employees with long faces stand in front of the desk, among them Walter and Jake.

MR. REESE

So, there you have it. They got everyone out but Roland.

JAKE

Did they at least find his body? He might not have been home, you know.

MR. REESE

They found what they think is Roland's body. I'm sorry, Jake. He was home, as far as anyone can tell.

Tears well up in Jake's eyes. Walter, too, is teary eyed.

MR. REESE

We'll be having a memorial for him. I'll let everyone know when.

The employees go to work.

INT. MEMORIAL CHAPEL - DAY

The chapel is packed with Reese employees. Mr. Reese ends his eulogy.

MR. REESE

And so we write the final chapter of our friend and colleague, Roland Hunter. Godspeed, good friend.

Mr. Reese turns and leaves the podium.

Walter approaches him. He has a strange look on his face.

WALTER

May I have a word with you when we get back to the office?

MR. REESE

Certainly.

INT. MR. REESE'S OFFICE - DAY

Walter stands in front of the desk. He still has a strange look about him.

WALTER

I received a package yesterday,
from Nome. There was no return
address, but it looked just like
the ones Roland sent when he was on
vacation.

MR. REESE

What was in it?

WALTER

Frozen fish. The date on it was two
days after Roland died. I wonder
what in the world is going on?

The two men gaze at each other for a long time.

EXT. LAKE IN ALIVE - DAY

Across the lake, two people are fishing, a man and a
woman. The man is teaching the woman how to cast. A
closer look reveals they are both African American.

They are watched by Norma Jean and Howard.

HOWARD

They'll do just fine here, just
fine.

FADE OUT.

THE END

"ALIVE, ALASKA"

BY:

LEANDER BEATTY JR

WGA EAST NUMBER: R23463
WGA WEST NUMBER 1225379

