

ECHOES FROM HEAVEN

BY

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FADE IN:

EXT. A REVIVAL TENT-NIGHT

The tent is sitting in the middle of a field. There are a dozen old cars and trucks parked around the entrance.

Above the entrance is a banner that reads, Reverend Abraham Hooker in bright red letters. Underneath is Healer, Prophet, and Blessing Man.

Organ music is playing. The sounds of singing drift out of the tent.

INT. THE REVIVAL TENT-NIGHT

The tent is filled with common folk. Most are sick or crippled. This is hope's last stop. Those that aren't suffering are there to support their loved ones.

Standing in the front of the congregation on a makeshift stage is REVERED HOOKER, a slick-looking man about 50 years old. Dressed in an expensive white suit he holds a well-worn bible against his chest.

His head is bowed. Behind him is a small choir consisting of several women. To the left is an organist playing a portable organ.

The music stops. There is silence.

Reverend Hooker raises his head and looks at the congregation.

REVEREND HOOKER

As I gaze around this humble house of
God I understand why the Lord has sent
me to you.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Amen!

A chorus of Amens.

REVEREND HOOKER

The Lord has sent me to YOU! HE CHOSE
YOU! I HAVE COME TO SHOWER GOD'S
BLESSINGS UPON YOU! I BRING HEALING AND
HOPE DIRECTLY FROM GOD! HE HAS BLESSED
ME WITH GIFTS THAT I MIGHT IN TURN
BLESS THE FAITHFUL! YOU ARE THE
FAITHFUL!

A strong wind whips through the tent. Dust and papers fly about.

A tall man in a old, beat-up, black cowboy hat steps into the tent. The brim of his hat hides his eyes.

The wind stops. Time slows to crawl.

A crippled old man turns. He looks at Elijah. Elijah slowly raises his head. Their eyes meet. Relief and peace flow into the old man's eyes.

The old man stands up and walks out of the tent. He leaves his cane behind. He touches Elijah's sleeve as he passes.

Others turn. One at a time they each meet Elijah's gaze. Each one leaves with the same expression as the old man. Each one touches Elijah as they leave.

Reverend Hooker stands with his mouth open unable to speak. The choir is silent as they watch in stunned amazement.

The tent empties. The empty metal folding chairs are littered with crutches, walking canes, and metal walkers. Two empty wheelchairs sit off to the side. Empty collection buckets litter the floor.

Elijah looks at Reverend Hooker who is shaking in his nine hundred dollar boots.

Elijah turns and stands in the doorway with his back to Reverend Hooker. He stomps his feet three times then disappears into the night.

A cold wind fills the tent. Reverend Hooker stands wide-eyed and shivering staring at an empty tent.

EXT. REVIVAL TENT-NIGHT

The remaining cars and trucks are leaving as old pickup pulls up. Inside are CLYDE DINKEL, his wife RACHEL, and their seven-year old son JOEL.

Rachel has her head propped on Clyde's shoulder. It is obvious she is very ill.

The pickup stops. Rachel rouses, opens her eyes. They fill with tears as she surveys the empty parking lot.

RACHEL
He's gone!

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM-DAY

JOHN ROBERTS, a dark-haired young man, is sitting on the couch in his blue jeans and a sweatshirt. He has his bare feet crossed on the coffee table and his hands folded across his stomach.

He's listening but not listening. He's heard it all before. A hundred times.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM-DAY

KATHY, a quasi-successful interior designer, is a fiery Irish redhead. She is talking very loudly as she is dressing in the next room.

KATHY
IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS! TWO LONG MISERABLE
YEARS! DO YOU REALIZE THAT!

Kathy hears the sound of a vacuum cleaner.

KATHY
JOHNNY, ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME!

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM-DAY

John is vacuuming the apartment.

JOHN
(MUMBLES)
I hate Mondays.

Kathy walks into the living room.

KATHY
ARE YOU HEARING ME?

John ignores her and continues to vacuum. Kathy walks over and unplugs the vacuum. John stops and stares at the wall.

JOHN
I said yes.

KATHY
I can't do this anymore!

JOHN
I know.

KATHY
Look at you! Your fifteen days away from being homeless! What are you going to do?

JOHN
Something will break. I know it!

KATHY
When! Two years I've been waiting, praying that you'd get a job. Any job!

JOHN
I know. I'm sorry.

KATHY
What ever possessed you...?

JOHN
All I did was submit my resignation!

KATHY
Which caused sixty-five students to request a refund, which in turn caused the Workforce Commission to conduct an investigation?

JOHN

So! How can you blame me? I wasn't even working for them at the time!

KATHY

I don't blame you! They do!

JOHN

They deserved it! They were ripping off the students! Charging twenty thousand dollars for classes that normally cost five thousand. Burying people in debt with short popped loans at twenty percent! Through a finance company they just happen to own!

KATHY

So what! That's just business! You blew a damn good job and your career just because you didn't like the way they were doing business!

JOHN

It was wrong! A lot of my students were career changers. Men in their late forties and early fifties. Men with families.

KATHY

So what? They should've known better! It was their decision not yours. It was your job to train them! That's it! Instead you got all wrapped up in their personal problems!

JOHN

They were my students! They trusted me!

KATHY

Well, that's just great! You got them a refund, cost the company six hundred thousand dollars and got yourself blackballed. What did it get you! Has even one of those trusting students ever called to see how you are? Think it was worth it!

JOHN

Do we have to go through this again?
Things will work out. You'll see.

KATHY

I can't...I won't stand by and watch
you...you need help.

JOHN

No! What I need is a job!

Kathy turns and walks over to the breakfast bar. She picks
up her purse and turns toward John.

Kathy looks into John's eyes for a long moment.

KATHY

You are a very special person. I pray
one day you'll find your place and
you'll do good things with your life. I
just can't live like this anymore.

Kathy turns away. She walks to the front door pauses for a
moment. She looks back at John.

KATHY

Goodbye Johnny.

JOHN

Kathy, don't...

She opens the door and walks out.

JOHN

go. SHIT!

John stands in the middle of the living room staring at the
door. He walks over, plugs the vacuum back in and starts
vacuuming with a vengeance.

The phone rings. The phone rings two more times. John cuts
off the vacuum cleaner, walks over and jerks up the
receiver.

JOHN

Hello!

PETER HOUGHTON (V.O.)
Is this John Roberts?

JOHN
Who's this?

PETER HOUGHTON (V.O.)
This is Peter Houghton with Cybernet Security. Are you still looking for employment?

JOHN
Yes. As a matter of fact I am.

PETER HOUGHTON (V.O.)
Excellent. I understand your phone interview went very well. Would you be available to come to Phoenix on Friday for an interview?

A stunned look sweeps across John's face. He glances impatiently toward the apartment door.

JOHN
Yes! Yes, of course!

PETER HOUGHTON (V.O.)
Wonderful! If you cover your travel expenses we'll reimburse you when you get here. If that's acceptable?

A look of concern crosses John's face.

JOHN
Not a problem.

PETER HOUGHTON (V.O.)
Good. I'll have my secretary e-mail you the specifics.

John dances in place like someone who has the urgent need to pee.

JOHN
Great! I look forward to meeting with you on Friday.

PETER HOUGHTON (V.O.)
See you Friday.

John drops the phone and runs to the front door. He jerks it open, runs down the stairs and into the parking lot. He slows down and stops as he realizes Kathy's car is gone.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM IN HOUSTON-DAY

John enters his apartment and walks over to his computer. He sits down and pulls up his bank account.

THE SCREEN SHOWS A BALANCE OF \$24.29.

John stands and walks over to the bar. He picks up his wallet and pulls out three twenty-dollar bills.

John walks back to the computer and sits down. He pulls up Map Quest and enters the start and destination information. He hits enter. Map Quest pops up with a map.

THE SCREEN SHOWS 1178.35 MILES. TRIP TIME 19 HOURS 44 MINUTES 12 SECONDS.

John pulls up a mileage calculator and enters the information.

THE SCREEN SHOWS FUEL COST EQUALS \$129.87

John leans back and puts his hands behind his head as he stares dejectedly at the screen. He closes his eyes.

JOHN
I'm screwed! Where am I going to get
forty-five dollars?

John opens his eyes. He stands up and walks into his bedroom.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM-DAY

John walks over to his closet and gets down on his knees and disappears into the closet. He re-emerges holding a large ceramic Tweety Bird and a hammer.

John takes the Tweety over to his bed and lays it down. John hits Tweety with the hammer. The ceramic Tweety is shattered. Loose change spills out all over the bed.

John walks over to his dresser and grabs several pair of white socks. He walks back to the bed and sits down. He starts counting the coins and putting them into a sock.

INT. SUPERMARKET-DAY

John enters the supermarket struggling with a half a dozen fat white socks full of change. He walks over to the Cash for Coins machine and dumps the socks one at a time into the bin.

The machine clatters and clanks as John empties the socks. He glances toward the checkout lanes and sees various people staring.

John empties the last sock into the machine. A moment later the machine shows a total of \$84.00.

JOHN

YES!

John smiles as the machine kicks out the \$84.00. John stuffs the cash in his pocket.

EXT. PARKING LOT OF JOHN'S APARTMENT COMPLEX-DAY

John walks down the steps leading from his apartment carrying a box. He walks over to a 1984 blue Volvo Sedan and opens the door. The back seat is stuffed with majority of his worldly possessions. John forces the box into the back seat.

BILLY, a neighbor, walks out onto his balcony. Billy is an old head who is living off an inheritance and a regular supply of pot. Billy watches John loading his car.

BILLY

You moving?

John looks up.

JOHN

No. Well maybe. Got an interview.

BILLY

Jesus Johnny! How many does this one make?

JOHN

I lost count a long time ago.

BILLY

That's a lot of shit to carry to an interview.

JOHN

It's in Phoenix.

BILLY

Ahhh. You're not coming back are you?

JOHN

Sure I am. If I get the job.

BILLY

What if you don't?

JOHN

Don't know.

BILLY

How does Kathy feel about you moving to Phoenix?

JOHN

We broke up this morning.

Billy does an exaggerated swoon.

BILLY

Damn! I knew there was trouble when I heard the vacuum start so early this morning. You know John I've lived beside you for nearly three years.

JOHN

Three months.

BILLY

What?

JOHN

I've lived beside you for three months.

BILLY

No shit! Seems like a lot longer.

JOHN

Does, doesn't it.

BILLY

Yeah, anyway I just wanted to say it's been a pleasure knowing you. You're a good guy. You got shitty luck but you're a good guy.

JOHN

Thanks.

BILLY

Did you pack your vacuum cleaner?

JOHN

Yes.

BILLY

Thank God! So, what you going to do with the rest of your stuff?

JOHN

Depends on what happens in Phoenix.

BILLY

If you don't get the job can I have it?

John pauses.

JOHN

Tell you what. If I'm not back by next Tuesday it's yours.

BILLY

Cool! Good luck in the interview.

Billy turns and goes back into his apartment as John walks back up the stairs.

EXT. I10 FREEWAY ARIZONA DESERT-DAY

TRAFFIC IS SNARLED IN A MONSTROUS TRAFFIC JAM, AN EIGHTEEN WHEELER IS JACKKNIFED AND ITS LOAD OF CHEMICALS COVERS THE FREEWAY. CARS ARE BACKED UP FOR MILES IN BOTH DIRECTIONS AS THE AUTHORITIES TRY TO CLEAN UP THE MESS.

INT. VOLVO-DAY

John stares into space. A drop of sweat drips off his eyebrow and into the corner of his eye. The sudden sting of the sweat in his eye snaps him back into reality. He wipes his face on his sleeve. The radio is on.

TRAFFIC REPORTER (V.O.)

The I10 corridor is completely shut down in both directions. A jackknifed eighteen-wheeler spilled its load across all lanes of traffic. Both eastbound and westbound traffic is completely stopped. From the looks of things this clean up is going to take several hours. Those of you trapped in this mess pay special attention to your engine temperatures. It's a toasty 107 right now and the high today is expected to reach 112.

He flips the radio off.

John puts his hand in front of the air conditioning vent. He looks at the temperature gauge. It shows 270 degrees and the needle is rising.

John flips the AC off and cracks a window. A blast of outside heat flows in. He rolls the window back up.

John leans over and pops the glove compartment open. He pulls out a map and with some difficulty manages to spread it out over the steering wheel.

He locates his position and looks for any alternative route. He notices a small side road leading off the freeway. He follows it along the map with his finger all the way to Phoenix.

John looks up at the nearest road sign. He wads the road map up, stuffs it into the glove compartment, and slams the door.

The glove compartment door pops back open. John, irritated, stuffs the map in even harder. He slams the glove compartment door closed again. It pops open.

With a great deal of control John takes the map out and folds it back into it's original folds and places it back into the glove compartment. He gently pushes the door closed. It stays shut this time.

John maneuvers the Volvo onto the shoulder of the freeway. He drives along the shoulder until he reaches a two-lane dirt road. He stops for a moment, then turns on to the dirt road.

John looks down at the temperature gauge. The engine temperature has stopped rising. He flips the AC on. John holds his hand in front of the vent and smiles.

EXT. VOLVO DISAPPEARING DOWN THE DIRT ROAD-DAY

INT. VOLVO-DAY

John is cruising along when the Volvo engine makes a strange noise. John looks at the temp gauge. The needle is in the red.

John takes his foot off the accelerator as he flips off the AC. There is a Clattering noise. The Volvo jerks.

JOHN

Oh Shit!

John sees a dilapidated General Store just ahead.

EXT. FRONT OF THE GENERAL STORE-DAY

The Volvo limps up in front of the store. The perimeter of the parking area is lined with dead looking cactus plants.

Steam is pouring from beneath the hood of the Volvo. There is another loud noise as the Volvo engine dies and stops.

John climbs out of the smoky wreck that is his car. He walks to the front of the Volvo. He pops the hood, which releases a powerful burst of steam.

John is forced back by the heat. He trips and falls backward and lands face first in the dust.

John lays still for a moment then rolls over. His face covered in mud he reaches toward the sky and yells.

JOHN
WHY! WHY ME GOD! ALL I WANT IS A JOB
AND MY LIFE BACK! IS THAT TOO MUCH TO
ASK?

John puts his hands over his eyes.

JOHN
(Mutters)
Please God.....

A shadow moves across John's body.

ELIJAH (O.C.)
Maybe he has a different plan for you?

John moves his hands from his eyes. He stares upward but can only see the silhouette of the man because the sun is shining directly behind the man's hat giving it a halo effect.

Blinded by the sun, John looks away and focuses on the man's feet. The man is wearing moccasins. A hand appears from the shadow open and offering help. John ignores it.

JOHN
Oh Yeah! He's got a plan alright! He
plans to bust my chops until I die!
That's his plan!

ELIJAH (O.C.)

Perhaps.

The shadow moves away. John squints as he watches the tall man walk away toward a beat up blue Ford pickup with a camper on the back.

John stands up. He attempts to brush himself off. The streaming sweat and the fine dust of the primitive parking lot combines to make John a dripping muddy mess. John's shoulders slump as he trudges to the store.

INT. GENERAL STORE-DAY

The store is your general Indian Reservation type store except the shelves are practically empty. Sitting stoically behind the counter is an OLD INDIAN. He watches as John trudges in.

John nods and walks over to the cold drink box. He pulls out a Crème Soda, opens it, and with one long swallow, drinks half of it.

He picks out another one and closes the box. He walks over to the counter.

JOHN

How much?

The Old Indian holds up two fingers.

JOHN

Two dollars?

The Indian continues to hold up two fingers. John pulls out his wallet and puts two dollars on the counter.

The Old Indian doesn't move. John pushes the money across the counter. The Old Indian still doesn't move.

John shrugs and looks out the front windows at Elijah. He is filling a radiator water bag.

ELIJAH PEDDIE is a big man with long gray hair and a gray beard. He wears blue jeans, a flannel shirt and vest. Topping it all off is a beat up, black felt, cowboy hat.

John looks at the Old Indian.

JOHN

Is there a mechanic or garage around here?

The Old Indian just stares back. John looks at the two dollars lying on the counter then back at the Old Indian.

JOHN

Two dollars? Right?

The Old Indian remains impassive.

JOHN

Do you speak English? Do you understand me?

Elijah enters the store. He pauses at the door. The Old Indian looks at Elijah. Their eyes meet.

Elijah walks behind the counter. Opens the cash drawer and puts three dollars into the drawer. He closes the register and walks toward the front door.

John watches in amazement. Elijah stops and looks back at John.

ELIJAH

Put the money in the cash register.

JOHN

Excuse me?

Elijah walks over to John.

ELIJAH

Pick up the money.

John looks at Elijah then at the Old Indian. He picks up the two dollars.

ELIJAH

Walk around the counter.

John obediently walks around the counter. He can't believe what's happening.

ELIJAH

Now pull the lever and put the money in the cash drawer.

John pulls the lever. The cash drawer opens. John places his money into the drawer. He looks at Elijah.

ELIJAH

Close it.

JOHN

This is the craziest thing I've ever seen!

ELIJAH

Close it.

John closes the drawer. Elijah turns and walks out of the store.

John looks at the Old Indian. He's smiling.

John follows Elijah. He remembers his other drink and walks back to the counter and picks it up. He glances at the Old Indian then walks out of the store.

EXT. FRONT OF THE GENERAL STORE-DAY

Elijah is walking to his truck as John walks onto the front porch. He sees Elijah and jogs toward him.

JOHN

HEY!...HEY YOU!

Elijah stops walking. He turns around and glares at John.

ELIJAH

Hey you! Is that how your mother taught you to address your elders?

John stops.

JOHN

I'm sorry. I meant no disrespect. I didn't know what else to call you.

ELIJAH
Sir will suffice.

John walks over to Elijah.

JOHN
Sure. Sir, could you please help me?
My car...

ELIJAH
I know. I walked over while you were discussing the situation with God.

JOHN
Oh. Sorry about that. I just sorta lost it. My luck has been pretty bad lately.

ELIJAH
I gathered as much. What do you want from me?

JOHN
I need a ride to Phoenix?

ELIJAH
Sorry. I can't pick up hitchhikers.
Company policy.

Elijah turns and walks away.

John stares at Elijah for a moment then looks at the old pickup.

JOHN
Company policy! You're telling me that is a company vehicle!

Elijah climbs into his truck. He looks at John through the passenger window.

ELIJAH

Yes. It's my truck. It's my company. I make the policy. My policy is no hitchhikers.

John walks over to the passenger window. Elijah reaches for the ignition.

JOHN

Please! I need a ride. My whole life depends on me getting to Phoenix by Friday.

Elijah pauses and looks at John.

ELIJAH

Your whole life?

JOHN

Yes sir. I have a job interview.

Elijah leans back and studies John.

ELIJAH

Your whole life depends on a job interview?

JOHN

I know it sounds crazy. I have been out of work for over two years. I've lost everything. I think I have a good shot at this job but I have to be in Phoenix by Friday.

ELIJAH'S POV.

Time slows as Elijah studies John. A large black crow lands on the hood of the truck. The crow looks at Elijah for a long moment. The world returns to normal. The crow is gone.

John is standing, looking at Elijah, unaware of anything unusual.

JOHN

Please! This is important! I'll pay you...

ELIJAH
What's your name?

John extends his hand.

JOHN
John Roberts. I'm from Houston Texas.

Elijah pauses for a moment then takes John's hand in a firm handshake.

ELIJAH
Elijah Peddie.

JOHN
It's a pleasure to meet you Mr. Peddie.

ELIJAH
I'm headed toward Phoenix. I'm not sure that's where I'll end up but I'll take you as far as I can.

JOHN
Fair enough. I'll get my things.

ELIJAH
Hold your horses. Here are the rules.

JOHN
Rules?

ELIJAH
Yes rules. Every successful relationship has rules. Wouldn't you agree?

JOHN
Yes. Of course.

ELIJAH
Rule number 1. We go where I say. No arguments and none of this, are we there yet.

JOHN

Agreed. As long as I get to Phoenix by Friday.

ELIJAH

Rule number two. You will do what I say when I say it. Understood.

JOHN

That depends?

Elijah cranks the truck and puts it in gear.

JOHN

Okay! Okay!

ELIJAH

Get your things.

John runs over to the Volvo and grabs his travel bag. He locks the Volvo and runs back to Elijah's truck. John stuffs his bag on the floor and jumps in.

The pickup disappears in a cloud of dust.

INT. GENERAL STORE-DAY

The Old Indian is sitting behind the counter. The sound of Elijah's truck fades. The Old Indian slowly stands up. He practically drags the left side of his body but manages to make it to the front window.

(CU) OF THE OLD INDIAN'S FACE AS HE STARES IMPASSIVELY OUT THE WINDOW. A SMILE SLOWLY DEVELOPS UNTIL IT IS BIG.

The Old Indian's POV, the dusty parking lot.

THE CACTUS SURROUNDING THE PARKING AREA ARE ALL IN FULL BLOOM.

INT. GENERAL STORE-DAY

The Old Indian turns away from the window. He performs the same dragging walk that got him to the window in the first place. He makes it back to his stool behind the counter and sits down. He is impassive again but there is a twinkle in his eye.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

Elijah glances at John who is covered in a layer of sweat and dust that is rapidly turning into mud as John continues to sweat. Elijah reaches under the seat and pulls out a towel and tosses it to John.

ELIJAH

For God's sake clean yourself up a bit!

John catches the towel and wipes his face.

JOHN

Thanks. So where are we headed?

ELIJAH

You'll know when we get there.

John stops wiping his face for a moment and looks at Elijah.

JOHN

Rule number one, right.

Elijah looks at John.

ELIJAH

Precisely.

John resumes cleaning himself up.

JOHN

So what was the deal with the old man at the store? That was undoubtedly one of the strangest things I've ever seen.

ELIJAH

How so?

JOHN

He didn't talk. He didn't take my money. I mean having your customers put the money in the cash register...

ELIJAH

Considering the fact he can barely speak and is practically incapacitated because of a stroke, I'd say he's got a pretty good system.

JOHN

Oh. I didn't realize. If he's in such bad shape, why does he work at the store?

ELIJAH

He's trying to earn enough money to get to Oklahoma.

JOHN

Oklahoma?

ELIJAH

That's where his children and grandchildren live.

JOHN

Why don't they come and get him?

ELIJAH

Don't have a way I suppose. I think he's about given up. He's just hoping to live until he can see the desert bloom one more time.

JOHN

I hope he makes it.

John finishes cleaning up as best he can. He holds the filthy towel out to Elijah.

JOHN

What do you want me to do with this?

Elijah looks at the filthy towel. He looks at John.

ELIJAH

Keep it.

John finishes and stuffs the towel beside his bags. He pulls out his other Crème Soda. He reaches into his pocket

and pulls out a Swiss Army knife and pops the cap on the Crème Soda. He offers the bottle to Elijah.

JOHN
Want some?

ELIJAH
I'll pass.

John takes a long drink.

JOHN
Thanks again for the ride. I was really freaked when my car died. I figured I'd have to walk to Phoenix. Lucky for me you happened to be there. Is it always this hot?

ELIJAH
No. It gets hotter.

John looks at Elijah.

JOHN
How come you're not sweating?

ELIJAH
Acclimation.

JOHN
Oh. How long does that take?

ELIJAH
A long time.

John looks at the inspection sticker.

JOHN
You know your inspection sticker is expired? About thirty-seven years ago.

ELIJAH
I hadn't noticed.

JOHN

So tell me Mr. Peddie what's an
Irishman doing out here in the middle
of the desert?

Elijah glares at John.

ELIJAH
Scotsman!

JOHN
Oh? Sounds the same to me. Other than
geography, what's the difference?

ELIJAH
THE DIFFERENCE! THE DIFFERENCE IS IF
YOU GET CAUGHT SLEEPING WITH AN
IRISHMAN'S WIFE, HE'D PROBABLY ASK YOU
TO HAVE A DRINK. GET CAUGHT SLEEPING
WITH A SCOTSMAN'S WIFE AND YOU'LL FIND
YOUR HEAD ON THE SHARP END OF A PIKE!

JOHN
Sorry. (Beat) So what's a Scotsman
doing out here in the middle of the
desert?

ELIJAH
Do you always talk this much?

JOHN
No...Well sometimes...I guess I'm just
nervous. I tend to talk a lot when I
get nervous.

ELIJAH
Ah. Maybe someday you'll learn to
appreciate the value of silence.

Before John can respond Elijah motions for him to be quiet.
Elijah slows the truck down as they approach a wide dry
creek bed.

John looks ahead. As the truck slows the sound of chanting
grows louder. They top a small rise and see a wide dry
creek bed that runs from a canyon.

At the base of a large cliff an OLD INDIAN MAN is kneeling before a gigantic boulder. Behind the old man is a YOUNG BOY. He is kneeling as well, although silent.

Elijah stops the truck watches the Old Indian.

JOHN
What's he doing?

ELIJAH
Praying.

JOHN
To a rock?

Elijah turns toward John.

ELIJAH
Who were you praying to when I first saw you? The dirt?

JOHN
That was different! I wasn't praying!

ELIJAH
Really. What exactly were you doing?

JOHN
I was just talking. You know, venting.

ELIJAH
And what is praying but talking to God.

JOHN
Yeah, but I wasn't on my knees so technically mine was just sort of an emotional outburst.

ELIJAH
Ahh! I see! So prayer requires one to be in the proper position in order for God to hear. Interesting concept.

Elijah puts the truck in park and turns off the ignition.

Elijah climbs out of the truck.

JOHN

Where are you going?

Elijah walks over and stands behind the Old Indian.

John slumps down in the seat and watches from the truck.

Elijah stands quietly for a few moments then walks over to the gigantic boulder and places his hand on it.

The Old Indian stops his prayers. Both the Old Indian and the boy watch in silence.

(CU) ELIJAH TURNS AND LOOKS DEEPLY INTO THE OLD INDIAN'S EYES.

(CU) THE OLD INDIAN'S EYES AS THEY BEGIN TO WELL WITH TEARS.

Elijah walks back to the truck. The Old Indian stands. The young boy stands. They watch as Elijah climbs back into the truck.

Elijah puts the truck in gear and pulls away leaving the old man and boy standing in the dry creek bed. John looks back at the Old Indian and boy. The Old Indian is smiling.

JOHN

What was that all about?

ELIJAH

He was asking God to move the boulder.

JOHN

Why?

ELIJAH

That dry creek bed used to be a flowing stream of pure artesian water. It fed the land all around, including his village. A storm blew that boulder over the cliff. It landed on the source of the stream and blocked the springs. The creek dried up. Now his village has no fresh water. Some are sick from drinking contaminated water. He said

the land is dying. So he prays to God to move the rock so the land can live again.

JOHN
He said all that?

Elijah looks at John.

ELIJAH
More or less.

John settles back in the seat.

JOHN
I hope he has better luck than me. All I asked for was a job.

LATER

Elijah and John are silently riding along the dusty back roads. John looks over at Elijah.

JOHN
So, you never answered my question.

ELIJAH
What question was that?

JOHN
What are you doing out here in the middle of the desert?

ELIJAH
I might ask you the same thing?

JOHN
I asked you first?

ELIJAH
It's my truck.

JOHN
Right. I was on my way to Phoenix. The freeway was jacked up. My car started overheating. So I took a short cut.

ELIJAH

A short cut! Do you have any idea where you are?

JOHN

Of course...a general idea.

ELIJAH

Really! And where might that be.

JOHN

Arizona.

ELIJAH

Ah! I thought as much. Has anyone ever told you the desert is a dangerous place? People die out here all the time. Most are like you. They wander away from the main roads suddenly find themselves lost and without water. They dehydrate and die.

JOHN

Thanks for the pep talk. Your turn.

Elijah cuts his eyes at John.

ELIJAH

I'm a messenger.

JOHN

What kind of messenger?

ELIJAH

The kind that delivers messages.

JOHN

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to irritate you. I was just making polite chitchat. Makes the time pass faster.

ELIJAH

Not from my prospective.

John glances over at Elijah who is staring straight ahead.

JOHN
I get the message.

John turns and looks out of the window. A quick smile races across Elijah's face.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

Elijah and John are riding silently along the bumpy dirt road. John glances down at Elijah's moccasins.

JOHN
Nice moccasins!

ELIJAH
Thank you.

JOHN
Where did you get them?

Elijah turns and looks at John.

ELIJAH
Why?

JOHN
I'd like to get me a pair. They look comfortable.

ELIJAH
They were a gift.

JOHN
From who?

ELIJAH
Are we doing the chit chat thing again?

JOHN
No! I just like your moccasins that's all!

John turns and stares out of the window.

ELIJAH

Maybe you'll find a pair when you get to Phoenix.

JOHN

Not likely. If I don't get that job I won't be buying anything.

Elijah cuts his eyes at John.

ELIJAH

You never know.

EXT. SMALL DESERT TOWN-DAY

The town consists of eleven old wooden buildings. Four on one side of the road and seven on the other.

Behind the four buildings is a large dry creek bed. The area looks dead. There are several very old trucks parked along the main road. The town had obviously been built back in the early nineteen hundreds. There are a dozen or so people milling about.

They all stop what they are doing to watch Elijah's truck.

ELIJAH'S TRUCK ROLLS INTO THE TOWN.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

John sits up.

JOHN

What's this place?

ELIJAH

I don't think it's big enough to have a name.

Elijah hears an old woman's voice crying.

OLD WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Help us dear God!

Elijah glances at John who is oblivious to the voice.

Elijah slows the pickup and pulls in front of one of the old buildings.

JOHN

What are you doing?

ELIJAH

There is something I must do. You wait here.

JOHN

You mind if I get out and have a look around?

ELIJAH

Suit yourself.

Elijah climbs out of the truck and walks down the street. John watches for a moment then climbs out himself. He stretches then slowly saunters up the opposite way.

EXT. SMALL DESERT TOWN-DAY

Elijah reaches the end of the street. He stops and looks around. He sees an old house off the road about fifty yards. AN OLD WOMAN is sitting on the porch. She has a big Bible in her lap. She is holding a huge magnifying glass in front of her face as she tries to read.

Elijah walks to the edge of the road. He has a clear view of the woman.

The Old Woman stops reading and raises her head. She searches the woods with her eyes. Nothing but a cloudy blur. She sees the shape of a man. She squints but the blur remains.

She squints even harder. The blur clears. She clearly sees Elijah's face as a warm breeze flows over her. Tears well in her eyes.

Elijah smiles as their eyes meet.

The Old Woman looks away. She picks up a handkerchief and dabs her eyes. She looks back for Elijah. He's gone. The Old Woman smiles although she is still crying.

EXT. SMALL DESERT TOWN-DAY

John is walking along the street. John notices all the locals are watching him. They are all smiling.

John smiles back and nods. A very pretty little girl walks up to John. She is carrying warm corn tortillas wrapped in a cloth.

The little girl walks directly in front of John and stops. She extends her arms offering John the tortillas. John stops.

JOHN

For me?

The little girl motions again for John to take the tortillas.

John looks around unsure of what to do. Everyone in town is watching expectantly. They are not smiling.

John takes the tortillas.

JOHN

Thank you.

A strong breeze flows through the town. The little girl smiles broadly and runs away. John looks around. Everyone is smiling.

John slowly opens the cloth and pulls out a warm tortilla. He looks around at the smiling faces. He tastes the tortilla. As he chews he smiles and nods thank you.

John turns and walks back to the truck. He sees Elijah opening the truck door. John jogs over to the truck and jumps in as Elijah is closing his door.

JOHN

Look what I have?

Elijah glances over at John and sees the tortillas. John extends the cloth and offers Elijah a tortilla.

JOHN

Want one? They're great.

John deftly pulls another tortilla off the pile and with one-hand folds it in half. He takes a huge bite.

Elijah cranks the truck. He turns and looks out of the back window to make sure the street is clear. Elijah glances at John, who is chewing a tortilla.

ELIJAH

You might want to conserve your gift.
It might be all you have to eat for a while.

John stops chewing. He stares at Elijah for a moment then slowly rewraps the tortillas and places them on the seat. He looks at what is left of the tortilla in his hand.

Elijah backs the truck out. He turns forward. John is chewing again. He holds the half eaten tortilla out offering it to Elijah. Elijah just shakes his head.

EXT. SMALL DESERT TOWN-DAY

As Elijah drives out of town he passes the Old Woman's house. The Old Woman is reading her book without the magnifying glass. She looks up and smiles as Elijah's truck disappears down the road. She starts reading again.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

JOHN

You know, that place was one of the nicest places I've ever been.

ELIJAH

Why, because they gave you tortillas?

JOHN

No. That was weird. It was the people. They had nothing but they were all smiling. They seemed happy.

ELIJAH

You find that strange?

JOHN

I don't know? It made me feel sad.

ELIJAH

Why, because they had nothing.

JOHN

No. I haven't seen happy in a long time. Seeing those people just reminded me.

Elijah glances over at John who is staring wistfully out the window.

ELIJAH

Perhaps when you get this job you'll be happy again?

JOHN

I hope so! I want to be happy again!

ELIJAH

How do you feel right now?

John turns and looks at Elijah.

JOHN

Actually, I feel pretty good. As a matter of fact I feel better than I've felt in a long time.

ELIJAH

Good! Fresh tortillas will do it every time! Maybe you should have another?

John glances down at the cloth.

JOHN

What about conserving my gift?

ELIJAH

Oftentimes, a gift is a blessing that is meant to be enjoyed at that moment.

JOHN

You think this is one of those?

ELIJAH

Yes, I do.

John eyes the cloth and looks up at Elijah.

JOHN

I'll have one if you will?

ELIJAH

Of course.

John grabs the cloth and unwraps the tortillas. He offers Elijah a tortilla.

JOHN

Great! I'll share my blessing with you
then we'll both be blessed.

Elijah pulls a tortilla off the stack and takes a bite. He watches John out the corner of his eye as John playfully flips a tortilla in half and takes a bite.

JOHN

You know, I think you're right. This is
a blessing. I'm starving!

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

John leans against the window dozing as Elijah drives. A rabbit darts across the road. Elijah swerves to miss it.

John is thrown against the dash. A coyote beaks out of the brush just as Elijah swerves. Elijah slams on his brakes. There is a loud thump as the truck slides to a stop.

EXT. DESERT ROAD-DAY

Elijah jumps out of the truck. John, though shaken, follows. Elijah and John run to the back of the truck.

A large coyote is crawling across the road. He pulls himself using only his front feet. It appears his back is broken because every time he pulls his body he yelps in pain.

He sees Elijah and John coming toward him. He pulls harder.

John stops dead in his tracks as he watches the coyote drag himself across the road. Elijah walks toward the injured coyote.

JOHN
Oh my God! Is it bad?

The coyote snarls and snaps as Elijah approaches.

ELIJAH
It looks like his leg is broken for sure. Maybe his back.

JOHN
Shit! What are we going to do!

Elijah moves closer. The coyote has stopped trying to crawl. He has turned and is snarling and snapping at Elijah.

ELIJAH
We've got to help him! Walk slowly over to his right.

JOHN
You're kidding right!

Elijah moves closer. The coyote is foaming at the mouth as he snarls and snaps.

ELIJAH
Do it.

JOHN
No way! I'm not getting near anything with that many teeth!

Elijah turns toward John.

ELIJAH
You want to leave him like this? If he's lucky he'll make to the brush beside the road. He'll stop to rest. Within the hour, if he's real lucky, he'll pass out from dehydration. With in the next three or four hours he'll

die but not before the ants find him or perhaps another predator!

JOHN

Alright! Alright! What do you want me to do?

ELIJAH

Walk slowly to his right until you are behind him.

John walks to the right until he's directly opposite Elijah.

ELIJAH

You must not be afraid. They sense fear and it makes them afraid. He's already hurt and terrified.

JOHN

Easier said than done! Have any suggestions?

ELIJAH

Put yourself in his position and know that he needs your help if he is to live. This is not about you, it's about him and his suffering.

JOHN

Right! Okay, what do you want me to do?

Elijah is squatting just out of reach of the coyote's snapping jaws.

ELIJAH

Move closer till you are just out of reach.

John inches forward. The coyote tries to turn and snap at John but the angle is too difficult. All he can do was tilt his head back and look at John upside down while he snaps at the sky.

JOHN

What next?

ELIJAH

I'm going to move closer and draw his attention. I want you to grab his head from behind.

JOHN

No way! He'll tear my arm off!

ELIJAH

Not if grab him under his bottom jaw with one hand and put you other hand at the base of his skull and spine. That way you can control his head.

JOHN

Sounds simple enough! Could you please run over it one more time!

Elijah moves closer never taking his eyes off the coyote.

ELIJAH

Just do it! Remember this is not about you, it's about him.

John moves closer as Elijah inches forward. The coyote is snarling and snapping. The coyote lunges toward Elijah. John grabs the coyote just like Elijah told him.

The coyote struggles violently for a moment then settles down, too tired and in too much pain to fight.

John is squatting down holding the coyote's head as Elijah examines the damage.

JOHN

How bad is it?

Elijah sits back on his haunches and studies the coyote. John looks down into the eyes of the coyote, who has ceased to struggle. The coyote stares at John.

ELIJAH

His back leg is broken. I think his back is as well.

JOHN

So how do we fix him?

ELIJAH
We can't.

JOHN
What do mean we can't!

ELIJAH
He's hurt too bad.

JOHN
So what do we do?

ELIJAH
We have to put him down.

JOHN
You mean kill him?

ELIJAH
Yes.

John looks down again into the soft brown eyes of the coyote.

JOHN
How?

ELIJAH
Grip his head tightly. Then jerk with all you've got up and to the right.

John looks at Elijah his eyes wide.

JOHN
You want me to break his neck!

ELIJAH
Yes.

JOHN
I can't just kill him!

ELIJAH
You have to.

JOHN

I don't have to do shit! You go on if you want! Just throw my stuff on the side of the road! I'm not going to kill him!

Elijah stands up and looks down at John. John has relaxed his grip and the coyote is lying docilely in his arms.

ELIJAH

Son, this is not about you. The animal is suffering. It will be a blessing for him.

JOHN

NO!

Elijah turns and walks about twenty yards away. He finds a shady spot and sits down on the ground. He pulls his hat down low over his eyes.

John tentatively examines the coyote's wounds. The coyote makes no attempt to move. He rest in John's lap.

LATER THAT DAY

John is sitting in the road. The coyote's head in his lap. The coyote's breathing becomes shallow and uneven. He shudders violently and goes limp. His eyes close and he is still.

John holds him for a long while. John looks up at Elijah. Elijah lifts his hat. He looks into John's eyes, which are filled with a deep sadness.

JOHN

You were right. All I did was prolong his suffering. It would have been a blessing if I only had the guts to finish him.

ELIJAH

Perhaps you blessed him another way.

JOHN

I don't see how.

ELIJAH

Nearly all creatures in the wild die alone. This coyote was held and mourned in his last moments. A rare and special thing. Especially for a coyote.

John looks down at the dead coyote.

JOHN

I have to bury him.

ELIJAH

We'll do it together.

John looks up.

JOHN

Thanks.

EXT.A SMALL CLEARING IN THE BRUSH-DAY

Elijah watches as John pours the last shovel full of dirt on the coyote's grave. John gently pats the dirt with the shovel.

JOHN

I guess we're done here.

Elijah turns to walk away.

JOHN

Why didn't you just knock me out of the way and do what needed to be done?

Elijah stops, turns, and looks into John's eyes.

ELIJAH

That would have wasted the coyote's gift to you.

JOHN

Gift?

ELIJAH

Remember the tortillas. We talked about how some gifts are blessings that should be enjoyed at the moment.

JOHN

Yes.

ELIJAH

There are other gifts of a much deeper nature that can only be appreciated after a time of reflection.

JOHN

I don't understand?

ELIJAH

You shared his suffering. He shared his death. I don't know of any greater gift two of God's creatures can give one another.

Elijah turns and walks away, leaving John staring at the grave.

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT-DAY

Elijah's truck pulls into a small clearing next to a dry creek bed and stops.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

Elijah kills the engine.

John sits upright and looks around.

JOHN

What are you doing?

Elijah climbs out of the truck and closes the door. He looks back at John through the window.

ELIJAH

Stopping for the night.

Elijah walks away. John surveys the surroundings.

JOHN

Here!

John climbs out of the truck. He stares at the thick dead brush. John walks around behind the truck. Elijah is rummaging around in the camper.

Elijah sticks his head out of the back door of the camper.

ELIJAH

Gather up some wood for a fire.

John stares blankly at Elijah.

ELIJAH

I suggest you get busy. I don't think you want to try finding firewood in the dark. (Beat) Especially with all the snakes.

JOHN

Snakes?

Elijah looks at John.

ELIJAH

Diamondbacks, they hunt at night. A stick and a snake look pretty much the same in the dark. If I were you I'd get busy.

Elijah closes the camper door.

John cautiously walks off to gather firewood.

EXT. CAMPSITE NEAR ELIJAH'S TRUCK-NIGHT

Elijah is kneeling at a fire pit putting sticks on a small but growing fire.

There is a loud CRASH.

John falls into the campsite with an armload of wood. John picks himself up, picks up the dropped wood and throws it on a huge pile of wood he's gathered. He surveys his work.

JOHN

That should get us through the night.

Elijah looks at the huge pile of wood.

ELIJAH

No doubt.

John points to the dry creek bed that nearly encircles the campsite.

JOHN

Mr. Peddie, is that the same dry creek bed as the one where we saw the old man and the boy?

ELIJAH

Yes.

JOHN

I guess God didn't hear his prayer either.

Elijah looks up at John.

ELIJAH

You never know.

JOHN

Yeah, you're right. I sure wish he had heard, I could use a bath.

ELIJAH

This is true.

John walks over and sits down on the ground across from Elijah. John watches as Elijah continues to add wood to the fire.

JOHN

So what next?

Elijah stands up and walks over to the camper. He opens a side compartment and pulls out a large pot and several cans. He grabs the napkin full of tortillas off the front

seat. He walks over to the fire and places the items on the ground.

ELIJAH

We eat.

JOHN

Great! I'm starved. What are we having?

Elijah pulls out a can opener.

ELIJAH

Beans.

JOHN

Beans?

Elijah pauses for a moment as he is opening the can of beans.

ELIJAH

Is there a problem?

JOHN

I can't eat beans?

Elijah sets up a tripod and hangs a pot over the fire. He pours the can of beans into the pot.

ELIJAH

Why?

JOHN

They make me fart.

Elijah looks at John.

ELIJAH

They make everybody fart. That's what they are supposed to do. I suppose you don't drink water either because it makes you pee?

JOHN

No, that's not it. It's just they affect me more than other people. My

girl friend would never let me eat beans. She claimed my ass became a deadly weapon when I ate beans.

ELIJAH

Indeed. I'll bear that in mind.

Elijah stirs the pot of beans. Elijah reaches over and opens handkerchief. He takes out several corn tortillas and lays them on the hot rocks surrounding the fire.

Elijah walks over to the camper and picks up a metal coffee pot and carefully measures coffee and pours it into the coffee pot. He grabs the radiator water bottle, opens it and pours water in the coffee pot.

Elijah walks back over to the fire and puts the coffee pot on the fire. He sits down and stretches out on the ground with his back propped up against a large rock.

Elijah watches the fire.

ELIJAH

Tell me about this job interview?

JOHN

It's for a network administrator's position.

ELIJAH

Is that what you do? Network administration?

JOHN

Well, actually I used to teach network administration.

ELIJAH

Ah! So you are a teacher.

JOHN

I was. I had a disagreement with my boss and we parted company. Next thing I know it's been two years without work. I pretty much lost everything. That's why this interview is so

important. It's the first chance I've had in two years to get my life back.

Elijah leans forward and stirs the beans. He flips the tortillas and shakes the coffee pot.

ELIJAH

Where you any good?

JOHN

I was voted Instructor of the month 14 times in 3 years and Instructor of The Year two years ago.

ELIJAH

Impressive! Did you like it?

John stares into the fire.

JOHN

Loved it.

ELIJAH

Why?

JOHN

The money was great.

ELIJAH

Was that the real reason?

JOHN

No, not really...I don't know? Maybe because I was helping people change their lives for the better. I was affecting people and I felt the world in a positive way. Besides, it was the only thing I was ever really good at.

Elijah studies John.

ELIJAH

How do you know that?

JOHN

Believe me! I know!

Elijah moves near the campfire and stirs the beans.

ELIJAH

I think it's ready.

Elijah prepares himself a plate full of beans and tortillas. He pours himself a cup of coffee the slides back against his rock and starts eating.

John watches for a moment then grabs a plate and piles on the beans. He grabs a cup and pours himself a cup of coffee. He sits down across from Elijah and starts to eat. He looks up and sees Elijah watching him.

JOHN

Who cares! I'm starving!

EXT. CAMPSITE NEAR ELIJAH'S TRUCK-NIGHT

Elijah and John are both stretched out near the fire. Elijah is smoking a pipe. Both quietly stare into the fire.

Elijah stands up and walks over to the camper. He reaches inside and comes out with a bottle and two glasses. He walks over and squats down next to the fire. He pours two drinks. He offers one to John.

John takes the glass.

JOHN

What is it?

Elijah finds his place near the rock and sits down.

ELIJAH

A very old scotch.

JOHN

I don't drink scotch.

ELIJAH

You didn't eat beans either.

John looks at Elijah for a moment. He swishes the scotch around in the glass.

JOHN
You're right. Cheers.

John sips the scotch.

JOHN
This is pretty good.

John tosses off the rest of the drink and extends his glass for another.

Elijah pours John another drink and then caps the bottle. John tosses down half the drink.

ELIJAH
I'd go easy on that if I were you.

Elijah finishes his drink and stands up.

John finishes his drink and hands the glass to Elijah.

JOHN
Mr. Peddie may I ask you a question?

Elijah walks over to the camper.

ELIJAH
Depends on the question.

John leans back against his rock and looks over as Elijah closes the camper door after putting the scotch back inside.

JOHN
What exactly happened today?

Elijah walks back to the campfire with a blanket in his arms. He sits down against his rock.

ELIJAH
I violated company policy and picked up a hitchhiker.

John smiles.

JOHN

And for that I will be eternally grateful! That's not what I'm talking about.

ELIJAH

Perhaps I missed something? What are you talking about?

JOHN

You know the thing with the old man. Then the tortillas and the...

ELIJAH

The coyote?

John looks at Elijah intently.

ELIJAH

Son, you have been twice blessed today. You have touched both life and death in a way you've never experienced before.

JOHN

You mean the coyote?

ELIJAH

Today when you were given the tortillas how did you feel?

JOHN

Confused.

ELIJAH

No doubt, and surprised as well? But how did you feel?

JOHN

I felt good.

ELIJAH

Why?

JOHN

I don't know. Maybe because I was so hungry?

ELIJAH

Maybe because you received a gift from a complete stranger for no apparent reason. A simple blessing from the heart. Given freely, expecting nothing in return she shared her life with you for a moment. She blessed you and you in turn blessed her by graciously accepting.

JOHN

How did I bless her? I got the tortillas she didn't get anything?

ELIJAH

How do you know that? Perhaps the mere act of your gracious acceptance of such a simple gift blessed her more than you will ever know?

JOHN

I truly hope so. (Pause) What about the coyote?

ELIJAH

As I told you earlier some blessings require a time of reflection before they can truly be appreciated. Your experience with the coyote is one of those. (Pause) Coyote's are funny creatures.

JOHN

How so?

ELIJAH

The Indians believe that what one coyote knows they all know.

JOHN

So?

Elijah looks slyly at John.

ELIJAH

I don't think you've seen your last coyote. As a matter of fact, I wouldn't be surprised if you haven't made a lot of new friends.

Elijah stands up and tosses the blanket to John. John catches the blanket.

JOHN
What's this?

ELIJAH
Your sleeping bag?

JOHN
Where do you want me to sleep?

ELIJAH
You're there.

JOHN
Here! On the ground! What about the snakes?

Elijah walks back to the camper.

ELIJAH
They won't bother you unless you step on them or rollover on them while your sleeping.

John stands up.

JOHN
Where are you going to sleep?

Elijah opens the camper door.

JOHN
Why can't I sleep in the camper?

ELIJAH
You ate beans and if I recall correctly you said your back passage becomes a deadly weapon whenever you eat beans.

JOHN
Yeah, okay.

ELIJAH
Oh, there is one other thing I feel I
should mention.

John is nervously scanning the dark ground.

JOHN
What?

ELIJAH
Diamondback's are attracted by two
things.

JOHN
What?

ELIJAH
Heat and human flatus.

JOHN
Flatus?

Elijah shakes his head.

ELIJAH
Farts, as you so delicately phrased it.

John looks up at Elijah with panic in his eyes.

ELIJAH
You shouldn't have any problem if you
remember to move every time you pass
gas and remember to stay close to the
fire.

JOHN
What happens if I forget or I fart
while I'm asleep?

Elijah shakes his head.

ELIJAH

I guess you get bitten. Then you die.
Goodnight.

Elijah climbs into the camper and closes the door.

John stands staring at the camper in disbelief.

JOHN

You could have told me before I ate the
beans!

John stands for a moment then moves next to the fire. He finds a place, lies down, and covers himself with the blanket.

He finally gets comfortable when he farts. He immediately gets up and moves to the other side of the fire.

After several minutes he manages to get comfortable. He is just about to doze off when he farts again. He grudgingly gets up again and moves to the other side of the fire.

INT. ELIJAH'S CAMPER-NIGHT

Elijah is watching John through the blinds. Elijah is smiling.

EXT. CAMPSITE NEAR ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

John is asleep on the ground rolled up in his blanket next to the dying fire.

A coyote appears out of the darkness. He walks over and sniffs John's sleeping form. Another coyote appears, walks over and lies down next to John.

An Owl lands in a tree and silently observes the campsite. All manner of desert creatures enter the campsite.

A huge Diamondback slithers from behind a rock towards John. The coyotes move away as the Diamondback draws near. Several more snakes enter the campsite. They all converge on John.

(CU) John's face as he is sleeping.

John farts. He unconsciously rolls over. He hears a rattle and opens his eyes.

The huge Diamondback is coiled not a foot from his face staring straight into John's eyes. John's eyes widen in abject terror as he stares into the eyes of the great snake.

John is frozen with fear. The Diamondback slithers over his legs. John waits until the Diamondback slithers several feet away. John sits up.

All around the campsite are snakes of various kinds moving about as if he didn't exist.

John looks toward the camper.

JOHN

Mr. Peddie? Are you awake? Hello! Mr.
Peddie, I need a little help here!

John farts. He freezes as a large Rattlesnake aggressively slithers toward John.

John quickly jumps to his feet. He runs toward the front of the truck.

He leaps onto the hood. His momentum is so great that he sides off the other side, onto the ground, landing on his head.

EXT. REAR OF ELIJAH'S CAMPER-DAY

The door of the camper opens and Elijah steps out. He looks for John. The snakes are disappearing into the surrounding brush.

ELIJAH

What do you want?

Elijah walks to the front of his truck.

ELIJAH

Where are you?

John's head appears rising above the fender. He's rubbing his head. His eyes still wide with fear.

JOHN
Be careful! There are snakes
everywhere!

Elijah turns and looks around. Elijah faces John.

ELIJAH
Where?

John points excitedly.

JOHN
They're all over the place!

ELIJAH
Show me.

John cautiously makes his way around the front of the truck. The snakes are all gone.

John looks under the truck and starts walking around the campsite looking behind rocks and under logs. No snakes.

John looks up at Elijah who is stoically watching John as he flitters around the camp looking for snakes.

JOHN
They were here!

ELIJAH
Of course they were.

Elijah walks away.

JOHN
They were! That's the last time I eat
beans!

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

Elijah and John are riding along in silence.

JOHN

(Mumbles)
They were there.

ELIJAH
Of course they were.

JOHN
No. No. You don't believe me. I can
hear it in your voice.

ELIJAH
I do believe you.

JOHN
I don't believe you!

ELIJAH
Oh! So now you don't believe me!

JOHN
No! I do believe you. I just don't
believe you believe me.

ELIJAH
What if I describe the big snake that
was beside you when you woke up?

JOHN
Ah Ha! I never mentioned the big snake!
You did see them! Oh, what a relief! I
thought I was going crazy!

ELIJAH'S TRUCK AS IT SLOWLY MAKES IT WAY TOWARD THE
MOUNTAINS.

INT/EXT ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

Elijah and John are riding along in silence. John is
slumped in his seat watching the road ahead.

John turns toward Elijah.

JOHN
You know, I just realized something!

Elijah glances at John.

ELIJAH

Good for you!

JOHN

I don't feel depressed! For the first time in as long as I can remember I'm not dreading today!

ELIJAH

Sounds positive.

John looks hard at Elijah.

JOHN

You have no idea! Waking up everyday knowing it will be the same as the day before. Searching for a job. Bill collectors calling at all hours threatening you. Nowhere to go. No money to go even if you had a place to go. Trapped in your own home alone. Worrying that even that will be taken away. Kathy, my girlfriend, wanted me to see a shrink. She said I was clinically depressed. She used to bring me these Human Resources handouts that described the ten symptoms of depression.

ELIJAH

Did you go?

JOHN

No. I vacuumed.

ELIJAH

Vacuumed?

JOHN

You know vacuumed. Vacuum cleaner?

ELIJAH

I know what a vacuum cleaner is; I just can't make the connection.

JOHN

I used vacuuming as a sort of therapy and exercise program. Whenever the depression got bad I'd vacuum my apartment.

ELIJAH

Ah! Did it work?

JOHN

Not really. I had cleanest carpets in the complex.

ELIJAH

I'll bet. So why didn't you go see a shrink?

JOHN

I don't need a shrink to tell me why I am depressed! I know why I'm depressed! I know the ten symptoms of clinical depression. I have all ten plus a few extra! Besides shrinks cost money and I don't have any insurance.

ELIJAH

Is that the real reason?

John looks at Elijah.

JOHN

Mostly. (Beat) You ever hear the saying; Luck favors the man if his courage holds?

ELIJAH

No.

JOHN

It doesn't matter. Anyway I felt if I kept trying and held it together that a break would come my way. You know a door would open and boom it would be all right. I guess I sorta believed that's the way things work.

ELIJAH

You don't sorta believe! Either you believe or not!

JOHN
I believed it!

ELIJAH
Good! Therefore you must believe in some form of governing dynamics?

JOHN
Governing what?

ELIJAH
That there is a design for all life.

JOHN
Sure, but I think it's pretty screwed up right now. At least from my perspective.

ELIJAH
How so?

JOHN
Just watch TV! Read any newspaper! Get on the Internet! Take your...

ELIJAH
The Internet?

John pauses and stares at Elijah for a moment in disbelief.

JOHN
You know the Web. The Information Super Highway. Computers linked around the world sharing information. E-mail, streaming video...

ELIJAH
Ah. Something like the old telephone party lines.

John pauses for a moment.

JOHN

I guess. You don't get out much do you?
When's the last time you were in a
city.

ELIJAH
Long time ago. Too noisy for me.

JOHN
How long?

Elijah looks at John.

ELIJAH
Not long enough. You were saying?

JOHN
Anyway, take your pick! It's all bad
and getting worse! Look at me! Two
years ago I was a respected
professional with great credit and a
productive life! Now according to the
credit bureau I'm a deadbeat! A nobody!
I'm not even a real person anymore!

ELIJAH
Interesting perspective.

JOHN
No, I'm serious! Think about it! You
are defined by what you do for a
living! When you introduce someone the
introduction is almost always followed
by his or her occupation.

John acts out the imaginary introductions.

JOHN
Hello there Mr. Peddie this is John
Roberts. He's a technical trainer for
such and such company. Ah, it's a
pleasure to meet you Mr. Peddie. My
name Fred Dunlap, I am an attorney for
the firm Churnem and Burnem. See what I
mean!

ELIJAH

Perhaps you need to adjust your perspective.

JOHN

Why do you think it's so important I get to Phoenix! If I can get that job I can change everything. I can get my life back. I can become a real person again!

Elijah stares at the road ahead as darkness sweeps across the road. The interior of the truck grows dark. The rumble of heavy thunder echoes overhead.

John leans forward and looks up at the sky through the windshield. The sky is a mass of black clouds rolling and billowing violently as flashes of lightning rip across the sky.

The wind is blowing hard, whipping the dust and debris around like a hundred mini tornados.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

JOHN

Looks like we hit a storm! (Beat) Well, at least it'll give the folks around here some rain.

ELIJAH

Not this storm. That's dry lightning.

A bolt of lightning strikes a tree near the edge of the road ahead, splitting the tree in half in a bluish blast of hot energy. The explosion rattles the truck.

John jumps in his seat and cringes. Elijah continues to stare straight ahead as the dust becomes so thick visibility becomes difficult.

ELIJAH

Maybe we can out run it!

Another bolt of lightning strikes so near the truck that the interior is filled with a blue glow. Their hair stands on end.

John jumps as the sound of the explosion reverberates through the truck cab.

JOHN

Go for it!

Another bolt of lightning strikes as Elijah puts the pedal to the metal.

Elijah's truck speeds through the dark swirling maelstrom.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

Elijah continues to stare intently straight ahead as the truck is pounded with violent wind gust and flying debris.

John recoils at the continued lightning strikes and the ear splitting explosions. Thunderclaps literally shake the truck as the high winds try to turn it over.

They see the edge of the darkness. In a moment they cross into the bright sunlight.

John turns and looks through the back window.

JOHN

We beat it! Man, that was wicked!

Elijah glances at John.

JOHN

You know, intense.

ELIJAH

I think it's moving into the valley on the other side of the mountain.

JOHN

Fine with me! As long as it goes where I'm not!

EXT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

Elijah's truck as it makes its way up a mountain road. Elijah pulls his truck into a clearing near the top of the mountain and stops.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

Elijah opens the door and climbs out.

EXT. TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN-DAY

Elijah walks over to the edge of the cliff and stares into the valley below. John sits in the truck for a moment then climbs out and follows Elijah to the edge of the cliff.

THE VALLEY IS AMAZINGLY BEAUTIFUL. THE SOUNDS OF THUNDER ECHO FROM THE VALLEY AS THE DARK MASS OF THE THUNDERSTORM ROLLS INTO THE VALLEY. DRY LIGHTNING CAN BE SEEN FORMING IN THE TOPS OF THE BLACK CLOUDS THEN RIPPING DOWN INTO THE VALLEY BELOW. THE STORM MOVES TOWARD ELIJAH AND JOHN.

JOHN

This is awesome! It's like being God!

John stares in amazement as the storm clouds roll toward them. The lightning strikes increase, as does the roar of the thunder.

THE DARK MASS SURROUNDS THE CLIFF AND GATHERS ABOUT A 150 FEET BELOW THE CLIFF FACE LIKE A DARK ANGRY SEA.

The clouds begin to dissipate and within a few minutes the storm is gone.

JOHN

Wow! That was the most remarkable thing I've ever seen!

ELIJAH

Interesting how a simple change of perspective can alter one's interpretation of the world.

JOHN

You mean the storm?

ELIJAH

I believe you described it earlier as wicked and now you see it as awesome.

JOHN

I'm not in it now. I'm just watching.

ELIJAH

The thunderstorm is the same in either case. The only difference is your perspective.

Elijah turns and walks back to the truck. John stands for a moment staring out into the valley.

Elijah opens the truck door. John turns toward Elijah.

JOHN

Your right.

A trace of a smile whisk across Elijah's face as he nods and quickly turns and opens the truck door and climbs in.

John stands for a moment still looking out over the valley. John turns and walks over to the truck and climbs in.

ELIJAH BACKS THE TRUCK OUT OF THE CLEARING AND DISAPPEARS DOWN THE DIRT ROAD.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

John and Elijah are riding along in silence.

A woman's voice echoes in the cab of the truck.

A WOMAN'S VOICE (OC)

Please help me!

John looks at Elijah.

JOHN

Did you just say, please help me?

Elijah continues to stare ahead and drive.

ELIJAH

No.

JOHN

Stop the truck!

Elijah slows the truck to a stop. He turns and faces John.

ELIJAH
You heard that?

JOHN
Sure.

John gets out of the truck and walks toward the back of the truck.

ELIJAH
Where are you going?

JOHN (OC)
Maybe somebody's hurt. They must be close by.

Elijah puts the truck in park and climbs out of the truck. He walks to the rear of the truck.

John walks down the road. He stops and TURNS TOWARD THE LEFT SIDE OF THE ROAD.

He scans the dense underbrush and sees a small boy standing deep in the shadows.

Elijah walks over and stands beside John.

Elijah motions for the boy to come out of the brush.

Joel shakes his head no.

ELIJAH
What's your name?

JOEL
Joel Dinkel. You the Blessin' Man?

John glances at Elijah.

ELIJAH
Maybe.

JOEL

Mista' if you're not the Blessin' Man
then get on down the road. My Mama sent
me down here to stop the Blessin' Man.
And that's what I'm going to do. So are
you the Blessin' Man or not?

ELIJAH

I am.

Joel looks at John.

JOEL

Who's he?

ELIJAH

A friend. Where's your mother?

JOEL

Next road to the right. Reveren'
Hooker's up there too. Mama told him
you were coming. Reveren' Hooker told
my Daddy you was the Devil. Are you the
Devil?

Elijah smiles.

ELIJAH

No.

JOEL

I didn't think so. You don't look like
no Devil.

Elijah smiles at Joel, turns and walks back to the truck.
John stands for a moment looking at the little boy.

JOEL

My daddy's got a gun.

JOHN

Don't worry.

John turns to walk back to the truck.

JOEL

I'm not worried. I'm not the one fixing to get shot.

John turns back toward Joel but he's gone.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

Elijah is sitting behind the steering wheel staring straight ahead. John climbs in and closes the door.

JOHN

He said his daddy has a gun.

Elijah puts the truck in gear and drives up the road.

JOHN

Did you hear what I just said?

ELIJAH

It doesn't matter.

JOHN

It does matter! Look Mr. Peddie, I just want to get Phoenix!

EXT. THE OLD TRUCK PULLS UP TO A SMALL DIRT ROAD LEADING INTO THE BRUSH-DAY

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

Elijah stops the truck. He looks at John.

ELIJAH

You can get out here. I'll pick you up on my way out.

JOHN

You can't be serious! Joel said his father has a gun! I don't know how they do things where you come from but where I come from, if a man has a gun you go the other way!

ELIJAH

Don't be afraid.

JOHN
I'm not afraid of anything! Except
maybe snakes.

ELIJAH
Then get out.

JOHN
No!

ELIJAH
Suit yourself.

Elijah turns the truck up the dirt road.

JOHN
Why are you doing this?

ELIJAH
You heard the call?

JOHN
What call? You mean the kid on the side
of the road?

Elijah turns and looks into John's eyes.

ELIJAH
That wasn't Joel. It was his mother.

EXT. AN OLD FRAME HOUSE SITTING IN A SMALL STAND OF PINE
TREES. IT'S SURROUNDED BY A FADED WHITE PICKET FENCE-DAY

Elijah's TRUCK PULLS UP TO THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE.

Parked underneath the trees to the left of the house is an
old pickup and a red 1999 Cadillac.

TWO MEN WALK DOWN THE FRONT STEPS. ONE IS CLYDE DINKEL. A
BIG MAN DRESSED IN JEANS AND A FLANNEL SHIRT. HE HAS A
RIFLE IN HIS HANDS.

THE OTHER IS REVEREND HOOKER.

BEHIND THEM ON THE PORCH STANDS THREE WOMEN. TWO OTHER
WOMEN SUPPORT RACHEL DINKEL, WHO IS OBVIOUSLY VERY SICK.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

Elijah stares at Rachel as he puts the truck in park and kills the engine.

ELIJAH
Stay in the truck.

Elijah climbs out of the truck and walks up to the gate.

CLYDE DINKEL and Reverend Hooker walk towards Elijah. Clyde haphazardly points the rifle in the general direction of Elijah.

CLYDE
Mister, you'd best stop right where you are!

Elijah stops at the gate. Never taking his eyes off Rachel.

RACHEL
CLYDE! DON'T YOU HURT THAT MAN! HE'S HERE TO HELP ME!

CLYDE
BE QUIET WOMAN! Now you turn around and git back in your truck and get off my land!

Elijah continues to stare into Rachel's eyes. Reverend Hooker steps forward.

REVEREND HOOKER
YOU HEARD THE MAN! BEGONE YE SPAWN OF SATAN! I COMMAND YOU IN THE NAME OF GOD! GET THEE BEHIND ME!

THE TWO WOMEN
(Call out in unison)
AMEN!

Reverend Hooker holds the Bible high in the air.

REVEREND HOOKER
I COMMAND YOU DEVIL TO LEAVE THIS PLACE AND THIS FAMILY IN PEACE. I COMMAND YOU

BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BE
GONE!

THE TWO WOMEN
AMEN! YOU TELL THAT DEVIL PREACHER!

Elijah turns his gaze on Clyde. CLYDE'S hands begin to shake as he tries to hold his gun steady.

CLYDE
Please Mister. I don't want no trouble.

Reverend Hooker begins to dance around and wave his Bible. He dances up close to Elijah and shakes the Bible in Elijah's face.

REVEREND HOOKER
BEGONE OLE' EVIL ONE. YOU DEMON BEGONE
FROM THIS PLACE! I COMMAND YOU IN THE
MOST HOLY NAME OF GOD! I THE ANOINTED
SERVANT OF THE MOST HIGH COMMAND YOU!

Elijah turns his gaze on Reverend Hooker. Their eyes lock for a moment.

ELIJAH
We both know who the devil here is?
Stand away!

Reverend Hooker falls to the ground as if pressed by some invisible force.

Clyde drops his rifle and staggers back. Elijah focuses on Rachel as he steps past Reverend Hooker and walks toward the porch.

The two women on the porch fearfully step away from Rachel. Rachel falls to her knees, her head bowed.

She slowly looks up and into Elijah's eyes as he approaches. She smiles.

The crack of a rifle shot shatters the silence.

Elijah is spun around by the impact of the bullet.

RACHEL
(Screams)
OH GOD! NOOOO!

Elijah touches his side. He looks at his hand. It is red with blood. He looks up.

Reverend Hooker is standing there holding the rifle. The realization of what he has done cascades across his face. Smoke is drifting from the barrel.

Clyde is crying.

CLYDE
OH MY GOD! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE!

John stares in horror. He opens the door, jumps out of the truck and runs to the front of the truck.

Elijah sees John running toward him. Elijah looks into John's eyes. John stops.

Elijah looks at Reverend Hooker. The gun is shaking in his hands as he stares wide eyed at Elijah.

Elijah slowly walks past Reverend Hooker. When he reaches the gate. He stomps his feet three times. Elijah steps through the gate.

A violent wind gust and swirls around the yard.

The two women on the porch fall to their knees crying.

Clyde Dinkel falls to his knees his head bowed and his shoulders shaking as he sobs.

Reverend Hooker turns and stumbles off into the trees with the rifle in his hand.

Elijah walks past John and climbs into his truck. John stands motionless, amazed.

Elijah cranks the truck and looks at John. John immediately walks back and climbs into the truck.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

Elijah turns the truck around. Without looking back he drives down the old dirt road. Behind him the sounds of crying and screaming fill the air.

The sound of a rifle shot echoes off the canyon walls. John turns to look back.

ELIJAH

Don't! You can never look back!

John sits quietly as they bump along the old road. John sees the red stain spreading across Elijah's stomach and leg.

EXT. THE OLD DIRT ROAD IN FRONT OF THE TRUCK-DAY

As the truck makes a turn Joel walks to the middle of the road and stops. He stares at Elijah defiantly.

Elijah slows to a stop. Elijah leans out of the window and looks into Joel's eyes.

JOEL

(Defiantly)

Did you fix my Mama? If you didn't I'm not moving till you do! Do you hear me Mr. Blessin' Man!

John leans his head out of the window.

JOHN

Get out of the way! My friends hurt! He needs a doctor!

Without taking his eyes off Elijah.

JOEL

Mister, this has got nothing to do with you. This is between me an him. So shut your pie hole! Did you fix my Mama!

ELIJAH

No.

JOEL

Well then, you can just turn around and head on back up to the house! You aren't leaving until you fix my Mama!

Tears begin to well in Joel's eyes.

JOEL
YOU GO FIX MY MAMA!

Elijah gets out of the truck and walks over to Joel. Elijah kneels down with difficulty in front of Joel. Blood is soaking shirt and pants.

JOEL
So, you the one that got shot.

ELIJAH
Yes.

JOEL
You going to die?

ELIJAH
I don't know.

JOEL
If you're going to die you best get busy fixing my Mama!

ELIJAH
I can't fix your Mama.

JOEL
You're a liar! Mama said the Blessin' Man could fix anything! My Mama don't lie!

Elijah smiles although obviously in great pain.

ELIJAH
I said I can't fix your Mama, but you can.

JOEL
What are you talking about? I can't do nothing! I'm just a kid!

ELIJAH

If you do what I say you can fix your
Mama. Will you do it?

JOEL

You're lying to me so I'll get out of
the way an you and that other fellow
can sneak off?

ELIJAH

Do you want to help your Mama or not?

JOEL

What do you want me to do?

ELIJAH

Come; let me whisper it in your ear.

Joel reluctantly walks over to Elijah. Elijah leans his
mouth close to Joel's ear and whispers.

Joel's eyes widen. Elijah leans back and looks into Joel's
eyes.

ELIJAH

You think you can do that?

JOEL

Sure. But it's not going to work.

ELIJAH

It'll work. I promise.

JOEL

If it don't, I'm going to come looking
for you! I promise you that!

Elijah laughs as he reaches for Joel and hugs him.

Something changes about Joel as Elijah lets him go. He
quickly disappears into the brush.

Elijah stands up and staggers back to the truck. He grabs
the door and looks at John.

ELIJAH

I think it's time for you to drive.

John jumps out of the truck and rushes around to help Elijah into the passenger seat. After helping Elijah into the passenger seat John jumps into the driver's seat and drives down the road.

John looks over at Elijah. Elijah's eyes are closed.

JOHN

Hang in there! I'll get you to a hospital!

Elijah opens his eyes.

ELIJAH

No hospital! I'll be fine. Just take me to where we camped last night.

JOHN

Are you crazy! You're bleeding all over the place! Tell me how to get to a hospital!

Elijah looks sternly at John.

ELIJAH

I'll be fine if you get me to the campsite.

John glances apprehensively at Elijah.

JOHN

You sure?

Elijah closes his eyes.

ELIJAH

Yes.

EXT. THE DINKEL HOUSE-DAY

Joel walks out of the brush and up to the gate.

Clyde is on his knees. Head bowed. His shoulders shaking as he silently sobs. Rachel is also on her knees, head bowed,

her body heaving as she cries. The two women try to console her but are crying just the same.

Joel stops for a moment at the gate. He walks to the front steps.

Rachel looks up in her anguish and sees her boy.

RACHEL
OH MY SWEET JESUS! COME HERE BABY!

Rachel holds out her arms. Joel slowly walks up the steps into his mother's arms. She hugs him tightly.

Joel lays his head on his mother's shoulder for a moment then pulls back and whispers in her ear.

Rachel pulls back with an astonished look on her face. She holds Joel at arms length and looks deeply into his eyes.

RACHEL
PRAISE BE TO GOD! OH MY SWEET JESUS! OH
THANK YOU LORD!

Joel steps away. Rachel tries to stand. She falters.

The two women try to help but Rachel shrugs them off.

Rachel manages to stand up. She looks toward heaven and with arms outstretched, and tears of joy running down her face, she laughs out loud.

The two women step back in fear and amazement.

Joel turns and walks down the steps to his father who is still kneeling and silently sobbing.

Joel walks over to his father and touches him lightly on the shoulder.

Clyde looks up. His eyes are filled with an infinite sadness. Joel draws his father into his arms, hugs him tightly then whispers in his ear.

Clyde's face changes from sadness to joy. He turns his head toward his wife. He sees her standing. Their eyes meet.

Clyde Dinkel picks up his son and walks up the stairs to Rachel never taking his eyes off her.

When they reach the top of the stairs Clyde hugs Rachel with Joel in the middle.

A gust of warm air blows across the porch. The Dinkel's pause and feel the warmth and the power of the blessing.

The two other women quickly stumble down the steps, run out of the yard, looking back in fear as they make their way to the Cadillac.

EXT. THE CAMPSITE BY THE DRY CREEK BED-DAY

Elijah's truck pulls into the campsite. John stops the truck, jumps out and rushes around to the passenger side.

He helps Elijah out. John turns toward the rear of the camper intending to put Elijah in the camper.

ELIJAH

Just help me over by the fire pit.

John helps Elijah over to the rock he's slept next to the night before. John helps Elijah lie down. John reaches to open Elijah's vest. Elijah stops him.

ELIJAH

Leave it be.

JOHN

We've got to stop the bleeding!

ELIJAH

It doesn't matter.

JOHN

It does matter! You want to die!

ELIJAH

No.

JOHN

Well, you're going to if you don't let me stop the bleeding!

ELIJAH

Sit down over there. I need to talk to you.

JOHN

No! Not until you let me at least bandage your wound.

Elijah looks at John.

ELIJAH

Remember rule number 2! If you want to get to Phoenix you'd best take a seat!

John takes a seat across from Elijah.

ELIJAH

Our journey together is coming to an end.

JOHN

Not if you let me get some help! Please Mr. Peddie!

ELIJAH

You may call me Elijah.

JOHN

Great! I get to call you by your given name just in time to put it on your tombstone. Elijah please!

ELIJAH

Quit your whining and listen to me! This is important! You are to stay here no matter what, until you know it's time to leave.

JOHN

What?

ELIJAH

Don't make me repeat myself! Just listen!

JOHN

When's that? After your dead!

ELIJAH

You'll know! When that time comes, take my truck. It should easily take you to Phoenix for your interview.

JOHN

I'm not leaving you out here!

ELIJAH

Rule number 2! Son, you will do exactly as I say! Is that clear! Don't worry about me. I'll be fine.

JOHN

Yeah, right! You'll be dead and I'll be lost out here forever!

Elijah laughs. He winces from the pain.

ELIJAH

Just follow your instincts and you'll be fine.

JOHN

What about you?

ELIJAH

I'll be fine. Really.

JOHN

I don't believe you!

ELIJAH

Are we going to go through that again!

JOHN

Yes. You said you'd get me to Phoenix for my interview, not die and leave me out here in God knows where.

ELIJAH

I told you I would take you as far as I could. This is as far as I go. The rest is up to you.

JOHN

Elijah, I don't even know where I am.

ELIJAH

You're in the desert Son. Look around you. Can't you feel it? The desert has taken you in as one of her own. It's over a hundred degrees right now and your not even sweating.

John wipes his forehead with his hand. Dry. He looks at Elijah.

There is nothing here that will ever harm you. The desert is a mysterious place. It will take anywhere you want to go and always bring you home. This will be a place of refuge for you. The desert will always take care of you.

JOHN

Great! That still doesn't tell me how to get to Phoenix. I don't even know how I found the campsite!

Elijah closes his eyes and lays back.

ELIJAH

Trust your instincts.

John watches Elijah for a moment.

JOHN

Elijah.

ELIJAH

What?

JOHN

What's a Blessing Man?

Elijah opens his eyes.

Joel asked you if you were the Blessing Man. You said yes.

ELIJAH

It's just a name.

JOHN
That doesn't answer my question?

ELIJAH
People say miracles follow the Blessing
Man.

JOHN
Miracles?

ELIJAH
Good things. Answers to prayer.
Blessings.

JOHN
You ever see a miracle?

Elijah shifts his position.

ELIJAH
Only one. But I know they happen.

JOHN
How?

ELIJAH
I just know.

JOHN
How do you just know?

ELIJAH
I like to think of it as sort of an
echo from Heaven.

JOHN
An echo from heaven? That really helps!

ELIJAH
Life is meant to be a shared
experience. Sometimes people who are
suffering become lost and alone within
that suffering. A dark hopelessness
overwhelms their spirit. The
hopelessness grows until words fail and
their very spirit cries out to God. I

hear their cry. I go to them. Most of the time they are expecting me. Waiting.

JOHN

Like Joel's mother?

ELIJAH

Yes. They only need see me... for a moment we are one. I feel their suffering...then I feel the power as it moves through me and I know.

JOHN

That's what you meant when you said you were a messenger?

ELIJAH

Yes. A Blessing Man, by whatever name you choose to call him, follows the call. But there are rules.

JOHN

Naturally.

ELIJAH

He must never speak to those who call no matter what. After he answers the call he must move on and never look back.

JOHN

Why?

ELIJAH

Any words that he may speak will only take away from the work. He may never look back because if he sees the results he may weaken and begin to believe that he is the power behind the miracles. If he stays in one place too long the people will begin to seek him out and corrupt the work and the worker. So the blessing man is always on the move following the call.

JOHN
What's the call?

ELIJAH
You know. You heard it.

JOHN
When?

ELIJAH
Today.

JOHN
You mean Joel?

ELIJAH
I told you that was the mother calling.
Joel was simply the guide.

JOHN
That's impossible! We were over a mile
away!

ELIJAH
Distance has nothing to do with it.
What you heard was from her heart.

JOHN
What happened today?

ELIJAH
Sometimes you have to touch them.

JOHN
That's why you were walking toward the
woman on the porch?

ELIJAH
Yes.

JOHN
Why did Reverend Hooker shoot you?

ELIJAH
There are those, who for reasons of
their own, will try to block the work.

JOHN
Like Reverend Hooker?

ELIJAH
Yes.

JOHN
What happened to him?

ELIJAH
I don't know. That's behind me now.

JOHN
Are you an Angel?

Elijah laughs out loud and cringes with pain.

ELIJAH
Ever hear of an Angel getting shot? No!
I am just a man who heard the call and
listened. Now I follow the call.

JOHN
I knew it! You're some kind of holy
man!

ELIJAH
Every man is holy! Life itself is holy!
It is in the power of every man to
bless one another.

JOHN
You mean I could go out and bless
somebody right now?

ELIJAH
You have blessed and been blessed three
times since we met.

JOHN
Three times? Okay, the tortillas and
the coyote but what's the third
blessing?

ELIJAH

You were a witness. You heard the mother's call.

Elijah shifts his body and groans loudly.

JOHN

I'm sorry! Is there anything I can do?

ELIJAH

No. I think the bleeding has stopped. I should be fine by morning.

John leans back against the rock and looks at Elijah.

JOHN

It sounds like a terrible life. Always on the move. No friends and family. Never being able to see the good that happens. Never seeing a miracle.
(Pause) Living on beans and coffee.

Elijah laughs and winces with pain.

ELIJAH

The calling is not forced upon a man. It's a choice each man must make of his own free will.

JOHN

You said I heard the call.

ELIJAH

No. I said you heard the mother's call.

JOHN

Elijah, I don't want this. If I can get to Phoenix and get that job. I can get my life back. I have a woman who I think loves me and I have friends back in Houston. That's the life I want.

ELIJAH

I wouldn't worry about it. I have a sneaky suspicion you'll get that job in Phoenix. I need a drink. Go get the

scotch. It's just inside the camper door.

John stands up and walks over to the camper. He opens the door and peers inside.

THE CAMPER IS VERY TIDY WITH A SINGLE BED, A SMALL KITCHEN, AND A DESK. THE WALLS ARE LINED WITH BOOK CASES THAT ARE FILLED WITH BOOKS.

John finds the scotch and the two glasses. He walks over to Elijah.

ELIJAH
Pour me a drink.

John pours Elijah a drink and hands the glass to him. Elijah takes the glass.

ELIJAH
Pour yourself one as well.

John pours himself one.

Elijah holds his glass up.

ELIJAH
Cheers!

JOHN
Cheers!

Both drain their glasses.

Elijah places his glass on the ground and lies back.

ELIJAH
Ah! There is nothing finer than old scotch. Wouldn't you agree?

JOHN
I would.

Elijah closes his eyes.

ELIJAH

You'd best get busy. It'll be dark soon and we'll need a fire. I think I'll rest a bit. Oh, one other thing. Always pay special attention to children. They will...

Elijah drifts off. John watches Elijah for a moment. He reluctantly stands up and walks to his stack of firewood.

EXT. CAMPGROUND -NIGHT

The campfire is burning brightly. Elijah is lying on the ground motionless.

John walks over and covers him with a blanket. John walks back to his rock. He notices the bottle of whiskey is less than half full.

He walks over, picks up the bottle. He walks over to his rock, sits down with his back against the rock, and pours himself a drink. John watches Elijah as he slowly sips the whiskey.

EXT. CAMPGROUND-NIGHT

The fire has burned low. John is asleep slumped against his rock. Elijah lies motionless, covered in the blanket.

Elijah opens his eyes and looks at John. Elijah sits up. The blanket falls away. Elijah looks down at his side. The wound is gone.

Elijah stands up and takes a deep breath of the cool night air. As he looks all around there is a sense of nostalgia in his eyes.

Elijah picks up his glass. He walks over picks up the bottle of scotch. He pours himself a drink. He sets the bottle down and takes sip.

ELIJAH
Nothing better!

Elijah tosses off the rest of the drink. He sets the glass down beside John. Elijah looks at John for a long moment. Elijah smiles.

ELIJAH
Goodbye John Roberts.

Elijah turns and walks off into the darkness, leaving John sleeping.

EXT. DESERT-NIGHT

Elijah enters a small circle of huge boulders. He's smiling as if he knows a secret. He stops and slips off his moccasins.

Elijah walks out of the ring of boulders onto a small rise. Elijah stops and looks out over the magnificent desert.

The desert sky fills with images. Elijah breaks out into laughter. Not the funny ha ha type but the laughter of sheer joy as he sees for the first time the miracles of his life as the Blessing Man play out across the night sky.

The images fade. The wind stirs around Elijah. A whirlwind develops at his feet. As it increases in intensity it rises up encasing Elijah. The sand obscures Elijah's body. The wind slowly dies down. Elijah's gone. Only his footprints remain.

EXT. CAMPGROUND-NIGHT

A noise awakens John. He groggily looks around. Elijah is gone. John gets to his feet. He sees Elijah's blanket lying on the ground.

JOHN
Elijah! Elijah!

John walks over to the camper and checks inside. The camper is empty. He walks around the campsite.

JOHN
Elijah! Where are you? Come on this is no time for games!

John walks into the brush.

JOHN
Elijah come on! This is so not funny!

John hears the rattle of a rattlesnake and quickly jogs back to the fire. He sits down beside his rock.

John reaches for the scotch bottle and pours himself a drink.

JOHN
THAT'S ALL RIGHT! YOU JUST STAY OUT
THERE! I'M GOING TO HAVE ANOTHER DRINK!
I JUST MIGHT DRINK ALL YOUR WHISKEY IF
YOU DON'T COME BACK! YOU HEAR ME!

John pours himself a large drink and downs it.

JOHN
YOU BETTER HURRY! IT'S GOING FAST!

John stares into the darkness, as the noise of animals moving in the brush grows louder.

John picks up a stick as a weapon. A rattling noise near him causes him to leap on top of his rock.

EXT. CAMPGROUND-DAWN

John is sitting on his rock holding his stick. He slowly climbs down and walks over to the spot where Elijah was lying.

He picks up the blanket. It is soaked with blood.

John notices footprints leading away from the camp. John follows the trail through the brush.

He follows them up a low rise and into a small circle of huge boulders.

In the middle of the circle are Elijah's moccasins. Neatly sitting side by side. John sees the footprints are now of bare feet.

John continues to follow the trail as it winds through the boulders and onto another rise in the sand.

John climbs the rise. At the top the footprints stop. The sun is above the horizon, highlighting the landscape in a beautiful golden glow.

JOHN

OKAY ELIJAH! PRETTY NEAT TRICK! PARTY'S
OVER! COME OUT! COME OUT WHERE EVER YOU
ARE!

John looks over the glowing landscape searching for a sign of Elijah.

After a few moments of nothing but the sounds of the wind, John turns and walks back toward camp. As John walks away the footprints slowly fade away.

John enters the area where he saw Elijah's moccasins. He picks them up.

EXT. CAMPGROUND-DAY

John walks back into the camp. His total demeanor reflects dejection.

He walks over to the camper and jerks open the back door, fully expecting Elijah to be inside. When he's not, John tosses the moccasins in and closes the door.

John stands for a moment, then he opens the camper door again and climbs inside.

John sits down at the small table and looks around. He notices a picture. He picks it up. It's a faded photograph of Elijah as a young man.

John studies the picture for a few moments then places it back on the table. He looks at the books lining the walls of the camper.

John notices they all have names hand printed on the spine. He scans the volumes until he sees one with his name on it.

John pulls the book out and opens it. He flips the pages. All are blank.

John notices one with Elijah's name on the spine. As he reaches for the book he glances out of the camper window.

Water is flowing into the campsite. The dry creek bed is filling up fast. John jumps out of the camper.

John runs over and grabs the bottle of scotch and the glasses. He notices the bottle is full.

John jogs to the camper and places the scotch and the glasses inside the door.

John turns just in time to see Elijah's blanket washed away by the swift current of the rising water.

John runs and jumps into the truck. John takes a quick look around, cranks the truck, and drives out of the flooding campsite.

EXT. DUSTY BACK ROAD-DAY

Elijah's truck appears out of the brush and pulls onto the road.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

John stops the truck.

John looks in both directions unsure of which way to go.

A coyote walks out of the brush. He walks to the middle of the road and stops. The coyote stares at John for a moment the trots off down the road.

John watches until the coyote disappears around the bend. John puts the truck in gear and follows.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

John rides along in silence. He sees a sign. It says Phoenix 30 miles.

John looks at his watch. He realizes he can still make the interview. John steps on the gas.

EXT. TRUCK STOP-DAY

John pulls up and parks Elijah's truck. He climbs out and walks to the rear of the camper and grabs his travel bags. He enters the truck stop.

EXT. TRUCK STOP-DAY

John walks out cleaned up and wearing a suit. He tosses his bags in the front of the truck and climbs in. He checks his watch then cranks the truck and pulls out of the parking lot.

EXT. LARGE CORPORATE COMPLEX-DAY

Elijah's truck pulls into the entrance and up to a guard shack. John stops the truck at the guard shack. The guard walks over.

SECURITY GUARD

May I help you?

JOHN

Yes. I have an appointment with Mr. Houghton.

The guard checks his list.

SECURITY GUARD

Your name?

JOHN

John Roberts.

SECURITY GUARD

Yes sir. First building on your left.
Park your truck in visitor parking.

The Security Guard steps into the guard shack for a moment. He steps back out and hands John a visitor's badge.

SECURITY GUARD

Be sure and wear this at all times.

John takes the badge.

JOHN

Thanks.

John pulls into the complex.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE LOBBY-DAY

John walks in and over to the receptionist desk. The receptionist looks up as he approaches.

RECEPTIONIST

Good afternoon. May I help you?

JOHN

Yes. I have an appointment with Mr. Houghton.

RECEPTIONIST

What's your name?

JOHN

John Roberts.

The receptionist scans her book.

RECEPTIONIST

Yes. If you will have a seat over there I'll call him for you.

JOHN

Thanks.

John walks over to a large leather couch and has a seat. He picks up a magazine and starts flipping pages.

John looks up as an attractive young woman walks in with a little girl in tow.

The little girl looks at John and smiles. John smiles back.

The woman and the little girl walk up to the receptionist desk. While the mother is speaking with the receptionist the little girl walks over to John and stands in front of him.

JOHN

Hello.

REBECCA

What's your name?

JOHN
John. What's yours?

REBECCA
Rebecca.

JOHN
That's a pretty name.

REBECCA
Why are you here?

JOHN
I have a job interview.

Rebecca stops smiling.

REBECCA
You should be going.

JOHN
Excuse me?

REBECCA
Someone's calling you.

Rebecca turns and walks back to her mother. They walk away from the receptionist desk towards one of the adjoining corridors.

John stands up and walks over to the woman and child.

JOHN
Excuse me! Excuse Me!

The woman stops and turns.

THE WOMAN
Yes.

JOHN
I was just speaking with Rebecca.

THE WOMAN

Is this some kind of joke!

JOHN

No mam.

THE WOMAN

What do you want?

JOHN

Rebecca just said something to me and I just wanted to make sure I heard her correctly.

THE WOMAN

Mister, I don't know what kind of game you're playing but my daughter didn't say anything to you!

JOHN

But she did!

THE WOMAN

That's impossible. Rebecca hasn't spoken a word since the accident. Now you get away from us before I call security!

Stunned, John stares at the woman for a moment. He glances at Rebecca who is smiling. He looks back at the angry woman.

JOHN

I'm sorry. I meant no harm.

Again John looks at Rebecca. Rebecca looks back at John and smiles. There is a long moment.

An almost visible bond happens between John and Rebecca. For a moment they seemed locked in a world of their own. John smiles.

Rebecca's mother pulls Rebecca by her hand and walks quickly away. Rebecca looks back over her shoulder at John and waves goodbye.

John has already turned away. John walks back to the couch, and sits down. He has a thoughtful look on his face.

THE RECEPTIONIST IS BUSY WRITING IN HER BOOK WHEN THE PHONE RINGS. SHE ANSWERS THE PHONE.

RECEPTIONIST

Yes. Mr. Roberts is waiting to see you.

The receptionist hangs up the phone and makes a note.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Roberts. Mr. Houghton will see you now.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Roberts?

The receptionist looks up. John is gone.

EXT. LARGE CORPORATE COMPLEX-DAY

INT. REBECCA'S MOTHER'S CAR-DAY

Rebecca's mother secures her seatbelt and sits back and reaches for the ignition.

REBECCA

Mother, why were you so mean to that man?

REBECCA'S MOTHER

He was making...

Rebecca's mother freezes. She quickly turns toward Rebecca, her eyes wide with astonishment.

REBECCA'S MOTHER

Oh my God! What did you just say!

REBECCA

I asked you why you were so mean to that man?

Tears begin to stream down Rebecca's mother's face as she reaches over and hugs Rebecca.

REBECCA'S MOTHER

What man?

REBECCA

The man back there in the lobby.

Rebecca's Mother pulls away and looks into Rebecca's eyes.

REBECCA'S MOTHER

I thought he was making fun of you?
Why?

REBECCA

He was the Blessing Man.

REBECCA'S MOTHER

The who?

Rebecca's Mother pulls Rebecca close as tears continue to stream down her face.

REBECCA

Mom?

REBECCA'S MOTHER

What is it baby?

REBECCA

He said to tell you everything is going
to be all right.

Rebecca's Mother quickly pulls away and looks into Rebecca's eyes and smiles as the tears continue to fall.

REBECCA'S MOTHER

They already are, baby. They already
are.

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT-DAY

John drives Elijah's truck slowly pulls up to the canyon where he and Elijah had first seen the Old Indian and the boy.

THE GIGANTIC BOULDER IS STILL THERE. NOW IT IS SURROUNDED WITH WATER THAT SEEMS TO BUBBLE ALL AROUND IT. THE CREEK BED IS AGAIN A SWIFTLY FLOWING CREEK.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

John stops the truck and watches the water for a few moments. John smiles and looks up toward the heavens.

JOHN

I see your miracle Elijah!

John drives through the creek and off into the desert.

EXT. GENERAL STORE-DAY

John drives Elijah's pickup into the dusty parking lot.

John climbs out and looks around. John is wearing blue jeans, a flannel shirt, and moccasins. He also has a beat up old felt hat on his head.

The cacti are still blooming.

John looks at his Volvo. It looks as if someone had just washed it.

John walks to the front steps, onto the porch, and opens the door.

The Old Indian is sitting impassively behind the counter.

John nods and walks over to the cold drink box. He opens it and takes out two Crème Soda's. He opens one and takes a long drink. He drinks half of it in a couple of swallows.

John reaches into his pocket and pulls out two dollars. He grabs his other Cream Soda and walks over to the counter. John walks behind the counter and opens the cash register. He puts the two dollars into the till and closes the cash register drawer.

The Old Indian watches impassively.

John turns and walks toward the front door. He pauses, turns and walks back to the counter.

John looks into the Old Indian's eyes. The Old Indian stares back.

John reaches into his pocket and takes out the keys to the Volvo. He lays them on the counter.

John turns and walks out.

The Old Indian remains impassive until John walks out then he smiles broadly.

EXT. THE FRONT PORCH OF THE GENERAL STORE-DAY

John stands on the front porch looking into the distance.

He drinks the remaining half of the Cream Soda. He turns and puts the bottle into a old wooden drink case.

He slowly walks over to the truck and climbs in. He backs out and drives off in a cloud of dust.

INT. GENERAL STORE-DAY

The Old Indian sits impassively until the sounds of the truck fade.

The Old Indian stands up. He picks up the keys. He walks like a normal old man to the front door. He reaches behind the door and pulls out a dusty sign.

He walks out of the store, closes the door and hangs the sign. His body obscures the sign. He stands on the front porch for a moment then steps off the porch and strides over to the Volvo.

He opens the door and climbs in the car. He sticks the keys into the ignition and turns the key. The engine cranks easily.

The Old Indian flips on the air conditioning. He holds his hand in front of the vent. The air is cold.

The Old Indian closes the door. He sits in the air conditioning smiling. He backs out of the parking lot and disappears in a cloud of dust.

(CU) THE SIGN HANGING ON THE DOOR READS "GONE HOME ".

INT./EXT. JOHN'S TRUCK-EVENING

John is driving along deep in thought. The cabin of the truck is filled with the crescendo of pleas to God. The sounds overwhelm John.

He manages to pull the truck over to side of the road and stop. He covers his ears with his hands as he stares straight ahead.

JOHN

Calm down. One at a time.

The din grows dimmer until there is one voice.

CHILD'S VOICE (V.O.)

Please help us!

JOHN

Well Elijah, I know what you meant about the city being too noisy.

John pulls the truck back on the road.

EXT. SMALL HOSPICE-NIGHT

John's truck pulls in the empty parking lot.

INT. JOHN'S TRUCK-NIGHT

John stares at the building for a moment. John climbs out of the truck.

INT. LOBBY OF THE HOSPICE-NIGHT

A night duty nurse and an orderly are at the front desk talking. John enters the lobby and walks right past them as if invisible.

INT. HOSPICE HALLWAY-NIGHT

John walks down the hall. He stops in front of a room. He enters.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM-NIGHT

A little girl is lying in the bed. She is bald and so very fragile looking. She is surrounded by an array of medical devices.

The child's mother is asleep in the chair with her head lying on the bed cradled in her arms. One hand touching her child.

John walks over to the child. He picks up her hand. The little girl opens her eyes. She smiles. John leans down and kisses her on the forehead.

LITTLE GIRL
He said you'd come.

The Mother wakes with a start. She opens her mouth to speak. John looks into her eyes and puts his index finger to his lips indicating silence. The Mother stares in amazement.

Tears well in her eyes as she looks at her child and then at John.

John turns and walks out of the room as the little girl closes her eyes. She is still smiling. The mother stares at her little girl for a moment the leans close. Tears are streaming down her face.

INT. HOSPICE HALLWAY-NIGHT

John walks down the hall. A boy in a wheel chair rolls in front of John from one of the wards. He also reflects the ravages of disease. His wheel chair is connected to various medical devices. He stops. His eyes bright with hope.

BILLY
I knew you'd come! I told them! My
name's Billy. Follow me.

Billy rolls into one of the wards. John follows.

INT. CRITICAL CARE WARD-NIGHT

Billy and John enter the ward. There are sixteen beds. Eight on each side of the room. Each bed is occupied by a child. They all reflect the ravages of disease. Some are awake. Others are awake but far too weak to even lift their heads.

John walks to the end of the row. He stops by the bed of little girl.

BILLY
Her name is Ellen.

John takes her hand. The little girls' eyelids flutter as she tries to wake. The tension seems to leave her body. She smiles.

One by one John touches each child. Some he kisses on the forehead some he just holds their hands. Each child responds with a smile.

As John moves from child to child Billy wheels out of the ward.

INT. THE FIRST LITTLE GIRL'S ROOM-NIGHT

Billy wheels into the room. The Mother turns. She smiles a sad smile. The little girl lies motionless, barely breathing.

INT. CRITICAL CARE WARD-NIGHT

John reaches the end of the row and walks out of the ward.

Billy wheels back into the ward.

A little Boy near the door raises up on one elbow and looks at Billy.

BILLY
Where did he go?

THE LITTLE BOY
He left.

BILLY
He's gone!

THE LITTLE BOY
I guess. Was that the Blessing Man?

BILLY
Yes.

THE LITTLE BOY
Did it work? I don't feel any
different.

BILLY
Just wait.

A warm breeze fills the room. The curtains sway. One by one the Children open their eyes as the breeze fills the room. Some get out of bed and walk to the window. Soon they are all standing at the window, looking down at the parking lot.

EXT. HOSPICE PARKING LOT-NIGHT

John walks across the parking lot to his truck. He climbs in and drives off.

INT. HOSPICE WARD-NIGHT

The Children look at each other in amazement. They all turn and look for Billy. He's gone.

INT. THE FIRST LITTLE GIRL'S ROOM-NIGHT

Billy wheels into the room.

A warm breeze fills the room.

The little girl opens her eyes and looks at her Mother.

THE LITTLE GIRL
I'm hungry.

The Mother stares in amazement then breaks down as she pulls her baby close.

Billy watches for a moment then turns and wheels out of the room. He stops in the hallway.

BILLY

I missed him!

His eyes fill with tears as he realizes he's missed his only chance at life.

A warm breeze envelopes him. He sucks in his breath as the healing fills him.

Tears streaming down his face he stands up and walks away from the wheel chair. He wipes his eyes as he walks into the ward where the other children are gathered by the window.

They all turn and look at Billy. They move toward each other. Some start giggling. The giggling turns into laughter and silly joy.

INT. SMALL COFFEE SHOP IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON-DAY

Kathy and her girlfriend Veronica are having coffee. The TV news is playing in the background.

VERONICA

Have you heard anything?

KATHY

No.

VERONICA

Are you sorry you did it?

KATHY

In some ways. But we were so different. I need to do something with my life. After he lost his job Johnny seemed to lose all his ambition. He got lost and with the depression it just got worse. He is special but the last two years were hell. I miss him but it was time.

VERONICA

You think you'll see him again?

KATHY

I don't know. Maybe. I just pray he'll find his place someday.

Kathy glances at her watch.

KATHY
I've got to run.

VERONICA
Me to.

Kathy pulls some cash out of her purse and tosses it on the table. She stands up.

KATHY
I'll call you later.

(CU) THE TV

LESTER PARKER (TV ANCHORMAN)
Do you believe in Miracles? If you don't then this story just might change your mind. Several days ago eighteen children in a Hospice just outside of Phoenix were miraculously healed. For the details of this story we go to Monica Luckens reporting live from Phoenix. Monica.

MONICA LUCKEN (REPORTER)
That's right Lester. Three days ago eighteen children were miraculously healed. All were suffering from terminal illnesses. I've spoken with their Physicians and they are completely baffled. The only ones who seem to know what's going on are the children. Here's what one young man had to say.

Kathy and Veronica both stop to watch.

EXT. THE HOSPICE-DAY

Billy sitting on a bench in front of the hospice. His bags are piled up next to him on the ground. He's dressed in street clothes.

(CU) BILLY AS HE SITS IN THE SUN.

MONICA LUCKEN

This Is Billy Carlson. Three days ago he was confined to a wheel chair. Given less than three months to live. How do you feel today?

BILLY

Great.

MONICA LUCKEN

Can you tell me what happened?

BILLY

We were healed.

MONICA LUCKEN

How's that possible?

BILLY

The Blessing Man came.

MONICA LUCKEN

Who's this Blessing Man?

BILLY

I don't know?

MONICA LUCKEN

Can you describe him? What did he look like?

BILLY

A cowboy.

MONICA LUCKEN

Do you know how he did it? I mean did he use some kind of magic or ritual?

BILLY

No.

MONICA LUCKEN
Did he say anything?

BILLY
No. Everyone knows the Blessing Man
never speaks.

MONICA LUCKEN
Do you know where he's going next?

BILLY
No. I know what you want. You'll never
find him.

MONICA
What makes you say that?

BILLY
He finds you.

EXT. HOSPICE-DAY

Cut back to MONICA LUCKEN.

MONICA LUCKEN
That was all Billy had to say. I
questioned several other children and
their answers were pretty much the
same. There have been three other
instances much like this one over the
past two days. It looks like a healing
wind is blowing eastward. Following a
magical man some refer to as the
Blessing Man. Although no one seems to
be able to describe this mystery man we
do have a picture taken by the Hospices
security camera. Here's what may be the
only known photograph of this
mysterious Blessing Man.

A GRAINY SHOT OF JOHN AS HE'S WALKING OUT OF THE HOSPICE.
HE'S FACING THE CAMERA. HE'S WINKING AT THE CAMERA.

MONICA

This is Monica Lucken reporting live
from Phoenix. Back to you Lester.

Monica smiles.

INT. SMALL COFFEE SHOP IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON-DAY

Kathy sucks in her breath as she stares at the picture of
John on the TV.

KATHY

Johnny!

VERONICA

Can't be?

Kathy stumbles out of the coffee shop.

EXT. A CROWDED INTERSECTION IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON-DAY

Kathy is walking down the sidewalk in a daze. She reaches
the intersection and stops. Waiting among the throngs for
the light to change.

The world seems to slow. Kathy looks across the
intersection and sees John. John looks completely out of
place in his cowboy outfit but no one seems to notice.

John's hat shades his eyes. Kathy stares as John slowly
raises his hat to reveal his eyes. She can't believe her
eyes. John smiles. Kathy bows her head momentarily as if
she is trying to refocus. She looks up and John is gone.

A panicked look whips across Kathy's face as she pushes
forward to the edge of the crowd. She frantically scans the
crowd.

A warm breeze blows around Kathy. She quickly sucks in her
breath as the blessing surrounds her. She smiles.

The light changes and the throngs move across the
intersection as Kathy stands there smiling.

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT-DAY

Elijah's truck is slowly driving up a steep incline.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

John is driving slowly lost in thought. He reaches the top of the hill.

John's POV

The interstate freeway. Traffic is heavy and speeding in both directions.

In the median of the freeway is a coyote who is trying to cross the freeway but cars are actually veering off the road trying to hit the coyote. After several close calls the coyote turns and tries to cross the other side with same results.

INT. ELIJAH'S TRUCK-DAY

John watches for a moment. Then floorboards the gas and speeds down the hill toward the interstate.

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT-DAY

ELIJAH'S TRUCK SPEEDING TOWARD THE INTERSTATE IN A CLOUD OF DUST.

ELIJAH'S TRUCK STOPS NEXT TO THE FREEWAY DIRECTLY ACROSS FROM THE TRAPPED COYOTE.

John climbs out of the truck and walks to the edge of the freeway as cars and trucks speed by.

The coyote stops his desperate attempts to cross the freeway. He sits down on the edge of the road and stares at John.

John turns and looks at the oncoming traffic. Cars begin to slow down. Within moments the traffic is stopped.

John motions for the coyote to come across. The coyote struts across the freeway glancing arrogantly at the cars.

As soon as the coyote is across, the traffic again accelerates. The coyote walks past John and sits in front of the truck.

John smiles and climbs back into his truck. He puts the truck in gear. He sees the coyote sitting in front of the truck. The coyote is staring at John.

John leans his head out of the window.

JOHN

What are you waiting for? Go home.

The coyote just sits staring at John.

JOHN

Move.

The coyote remains.

JOHN

What do you want?

The coyote stares at John. John puts the truck in reverse and backs up. He turns the truck in an effort to drive around the coyote.

The coyote moves again in front of the truck, sits down and stares at John.

John sits for a moment then climbs out of the truck and walks around to the front of the truck. He stands facing the coyote.

JOHN

Okay buddy, what's the deal?

The coyote looks at John then walks past John to the open door of the truck, sits down and looks back at John.

JOHN

Ah, you want a ride. Is that it?

The coyote yelps and dances around in front of the open door.

John smiles.

JOHN

Okay, you can have a ride but first there are rules. Every successful relationship has rules. Don't you agree?

The coyote sits down and stares inquisitively at John.

JOHN

Rule number one. We go where I say. No arguments and none of this are we there yet. Rule number two. You will do what I say when I say it. Understood?

The coyote sits for a moment as if considering the rules. He looks at John, then jumps into the truck and sits in the passenger seat. The coyote stares at John through the windshield.

JOHN

I'll take that as a yes.

John walks around to the drivers' side and climbs in. John puts the truck in gear and drives back to the dirt road.

A child's voice breaks the silence.

CHILD'S VOICE (OC)

God please....!

John takes his foot off the gas. He turns toward the coyote.

JOHN

Did you hear that?

The coyote dances around on the passenger seat as if answering yes.

JOHN

Thought so.

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT-DAY

John's truck as it makes its way back up the dirt road. It tops the hill and disappears. Poof! No dust trail. No road. Nothing. Just raw desert.

EXT. THE DESERT IN ALL IT'S GLORY-DAY

A MALE VOICE (V.O.)

To some among you, you know who you
are, the Blessing Man told me to tell
you," Don't be afraid. Everything is
going to be alright."

FADE OUT.

THE END