

GONDOLIER

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FADE IN

**EXT. WHEAT STUBBLE FIELD - DAY**

TRAVIS, 30s, yellow hi-vis attire, work-boots, thick gloves and a worried frown, walks across the field.

He talks into his two-way radio as he strides towards the electricity pylon at the other side.

CONTROL (V.O.)  
Emergency services need it fixing  
pretty damn pronto.

TRAVIS  
You gonna power it down then?

CONTROL (V.O.)  
(distracted)  
What?

TRAVIS  
You know, cut the power so I can get  
on with my job.

CONTROL (V.O.)  
No, not you 'what'. 'What' whoever's  
banging the shit out of my door.  
(shouting)  
Hey...

TRAVIS  
(grinning)  
Oh, you got Donna in there under  
false pretences again?

No answer. The radio goes dead.

Travis shrugs, picks up the pace, but takes time to wave to the FARMER on his tractor at the other end of the field.

He approaches the...

**PYLON**

Travis checks his safety harness, tugs at the straps then tugs his gloves on tighter.

A SCREECH of tires from behind.

Travis turns and peers at the road a quarter mile back.

No sign of a car, screeching or otherwise. He glances at the Farmer but he just continues oblivious to the noise.

He turns back to the pylon and climbs.

Slow but steady wins the race, one rung at a time.

### **FIRST PLATFORM**

Travis steps onto the metal beam, shimmies around the upright steel girder and starts up the second set of metal rungs.

This time he takes the safety line from his belt and uses the nylon carabiner clip to secure himself to the girder edge before ascending.

### **SECOND PLATFORM**

Travis steps onto the platform as his radio squawks.

Travis peers at his radio and shakes it.

The sounds of BREAKING GLASS emanates from the crackling radio.

TRAVIS  
Chris? You there?

The radio goes dead.

Travis looks back down at the ground, shakes his head, clips the carabiner on and steps onto...

### **THIRD PLATFORM**

Another SCREECH of tyres, followed by a CRASH and glass SHATTERING, lots of glass.

He looks out to the road where a long single-decker bus has turned over 180 degrees, now on its back in the road.

Someone, impossible to tell who from Travis's vantage point, pulls themselves out through a shattered window.

Then another, and another.

There's something very wrong about the crowd that assembles outside the bus. Arms are at odd angles, legs too, more than one of them has a missing limb.

FARMER  
HEY, YOU THERE!

A loud HISS fills the air.

The sound comes from twenty sets of lips stretched back over bared teeth.

Then, as one, they run... straight at the Farmer.

FARMER  
HEY!

The horde run towards him, preternaturally quick.

He turns the tractor, seeking an escape route.

Too late.

The horde swarm up and onto him.

The Farmer's SCREAM is quickly muffled by the weight of his attackers.

Travis can see nothing but a mass of bodies.

TRAVIS  
Hey, get off --

The horde stop, necks crane as one and they spy Travis up on the pylon.

TRAVIS  
Shit.

HISS

The horde move as one towards the pylon.

The stubby ladders prove no hindrance, they grab the upright girders and climb, over each other when it's quicker.

They reach the first platform in seconds and keep climbing.

One of them, a BALD MAN, slips and falls. Strikes a live cable on the way back down, electricity pulses through the man and he flops to the ground, dead?

Travis is transfixed by their movement, ghoulish fascination overriding sense.

The HISS comes again snapping Travis out of his trance.

He steps out onto the cross beam girder and then steps off, into...

### THE GONDOLA

No Italian romantic luxury here, this is a power line gondola, a sturdy yellow plastic box suspended beneath the cable by a manual pulley system.

Travis lands with a THUMP, but on his feet.

He starts to crank the pulley handle, propelling the gondola along the cable and away from the...

TRAVIS  
(whisper)  
Zombies?

He shakes his head but they, whatever they are, keep climbing.

Travis pumps his arms for all they are worth.

He's twenty feet out when the first of the horde reach the second platform and jumps...

Out, up and towards the gondola.

THUD, the gondola shakes from the impact.

But the FEMALE JUMPER finds no purchase and falls.

Travis peers over the side and sees the Female Jumper smack into the ground.

She immediately gets up and starts the climb back up the pylon.

Travis' eyes light up with an idea; he keeps pumping the pulley and moving the gondola along the cable.

He eyes the far pylon, beyond the middle of the cable where there is a clear section of frayed wire.

The horde quickly ascend to the third platform.

Then stop.

So does Travis, watching their actions.

They HISS but don't move.

A FAT WOMAN nearest the cable drops down and hugs the currently inert cable, a THIN WOMAN drops, climbs over the first woman before assuming the same position hugging the cable.

TRAVIS

Fuck.

He gets back to pumping the pulley as another attacker shimmy along the back of one of its brethren creating an ever longer (sub)human bridge.

Travis takes time to glance back.

They are close, closing in and quicker than his gondola.

The horde are no more than ten feet from the gondola, a few more people in the chain and they'll be above him.

The horde keep building their bridge.

Travis keeps cranking the handle.

BANG

The gondola sways violently under the impact of a TEEN GIRL smacking into the yellow side.

Travis falls backwards.

The Teen's hands cling to the outer lip of the gondola.

Travis gets to one knee.

BANG

Another body connects, but not directly with the gondola, instead right onto the other zombie.

It climbs up the Teen's back as Travis hauls himself to his feet.

Travis, upright, grabs a random tool from his belt... a screwdriver.

A REDHEAD WOMAN peers over the lip of the gondola and HISSES.

Finally, Travis sees one up close, taught skin stretched over bone, complexion a mix of palor and bruises, eyes bloodshot and darting.

Dead?

Crazy?

Travis doesn't know.

She pulls herself upwards.

Travis swings his hand with as much force as he can muster.

The screwdriver connects with the side of her head.

The Redhead slips backwards but doesn't fall, she clings to the Teen and stares malevolently up at Travis.

One hand up, then the next, then THUD as another one hits the gondola side.

Travis rocks on his heels but grabs the side of the cab before he falls.

The Female Jumper is back, one hand on the gondola, one on the Teen's neck.

The three women HISS as one.

Travis grabs a claw hammer from and smacks it into the Redhead's face.

She slips back and grabs the Teen round the waist.

He pushes his advantage and prises the fingers of the Teen's left hand up and off the gondola.

She slips, the combination of gravity and the Redheads weight combine to send them both falling to the ground.

The Female Jumper hangs on by one hand.

Travis reaches out and works the pulley with one hand.

He uses his purchase to steady his balance and raises a rubber booted foot.

He kicks out and connects with her fingers.

Again and again, he kicks out until finally she too drops back to the ground.

Travis exhales a breath of relief and spares a glance at the bridge.

They are still coming, he needs to get more distance between him and them.

Travis redoubles his efforts on the pulley.

The pulley CREAKS as Travis pushes it, the distances between him and the bridge growing ever so slightly.

TRAVIS

C'mon.

He gives a mighty pull on the handle driving the pulley.

CRACK

One pulley gear shears from its housing and the gondola stops moving forward, swings in limbo.

TRAVIS

Fuck.

He yanks the pulley, pushes it, hits it with his fist.

Nothing.

The bridge is only a few bodies short of the gondola.

THUD

A TALL MAN already has his elbows over the side.

Travis looks frantically around the interior of the gondolier, hoping for something, anything...

He grabs a small black bag.

The Tall Man drops into the gondola.

Face to face.

Travis uses the bag to smash the man in the face and at the same time, he does two things.

He propels himself backwards and falls from the gondola and throws something upwards.

The Tall Man leaps after Travis...

Who bounces back upwards, his safety line connected by the carabiner clip he'd thrown at the cable.

Tall Man catches a boot and clings on.

Travis uses his other foot to kick out but it's hard to get accuracy and power when you are dangling eighty feet up.



The Tall Man tries to get his other hand onto Travis' leg.

Travis relaxes and wriggles his foot, pumps it and then wriggles again.

His boot slips off his foot.

### **CABLE**

Travis reaches up and grabs the cable, hand over hand he pulls himself further out towards the middle of the cable, towards the next pylon and safety.

The next pylon...

Is a swarm of crazies, already at the second platform.

TRAVIS

Goddamit!

Travis pulls the small black bag from his tool belt.

INSERT: Emergency HV Kit

Travis yanks himself forward, hand over hand, rhythm increasing.

The horde on the second pylon reach the third platform.

Travis glances backwards.

Behind him, they are struggling to get out of the gondola and recreate their bridge, no stable platform to build from.

A SMALL GIRL climbs onto the cable and copies Travis' movements. She's slow but coming.

Travis focuses ahead, the damaged cable just feet away.

On the other pylon, they've started to form a bridge too.

Behind him Small Girl HISSES, Travis can almost feel the spittle on his neck.

He lets go of the cable and drops, then bounces back up.

The Small Girl cannot hold on as the cable vibrates in her small hands.

Travis watches her fall, stifles a sob then pulls himself back to the cable.

Two more stretches and he's under the damaged section.  
 He steadies himself and takes the bag and unrolls it.  
 Unfurled it resembles a small black towel.

TRAVIS  
 Healthy and safety would have a  
 fucking fit.

He giggles, a manic edge to it.

He peels a protective film from the patch.

He wraps one half of the kit round the cable and reaches  
 under to pull the other half up and round.

Ahead of him the bridge from the second pylon grows, at  
 least ten bodies in it now. Probably ten to go until they  
 reach him.

TRAVIS  
 Fuck it.

He pulls the second half round and pulls it back over  
 itself, pulling the tube tight.

The cable sparks as the patch creates a solid connection.

Travis lets go of the cable and hangs by his safety line.

To his right the new bridge jerks and writhes, the links in  
 it falling to the ground a couple hitting and bouncing off  
 other cables as they drop.

To his left the same, nearly twenty smashing to the floor  
 with dull thuds.

TRAVIS  
 (weakly)  
 Go me.

Maniac giggle again.

Travis hangs and swings in the breeze.

The right pylon still has a bunch of crazies swarming on the  
 third platform.

The left is empty.

TRAVIS  
 Got you fuckers!

Travis jerk-jumps his safety line back towards the gondola.

It's slow progress.

He's ten feet away when he hears it.

HISS

Female Jumper rises from the gondola and reaches for Travis.

She can't reach.

Neither can Travis.

FADE OUT

THE END