

THE RETURN

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FADE IN:

EXT. RED MOUNTAIN TRAIL / LOOKOUT - DAY

ABBY, 26, eases to the mountain's edge -- layers of red rock spires ripple out under thick, dark clouds.

She takes in the view...

Distant thunder RUMBLES.

Abby takes off her pack. Unzips. Pulls out a cell phone with a floral-patterned case.

She looks back toward the trail. She holds her gaze...

Shakes her head with a curious smile.

Her eyes shift to her phone. Poses for a selfie.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

DOROTHY -- 50, National Forest Service uniform, face worn from the outdoors -- takes her attention off a packet of papers and looks across her desk --

DOROTHY

Got a driver's license with you?

DON -- 59, flannel and a vest that both look straight off the rack -- sits across from Dorothy. His flannel is unbuttoned a bit too low, revealing a white tank top and gold chain. He takes out a money clip. Hands over his license.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Long way comin' from Illinois.

DON

I'm from Chicago, not Illinois.

Dorothy takes a closer look at the license...

DOROTHY

A mild understanding of geography is sort of a prerequisite here.

Dorothy shifts her eyes to Don -- clean-shaven, combed hair, no ring.

She smiles.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
It's a joke.

DON
Hysterical. So I ugh.... got the
gig or what?

DOROTHY
Usually don't hire mid-season, but
we have a couple trails in back of
Crestone need checkin' on.

Don perks at the mention of Crestone.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Take it you know how this works?
Six days on, four off. Move some
brush, get a few water samples,
check in with visitors. It's easy
work if you can hack the
backcountry.

DON
Believe me, I can hack it.

DOROTHY
I believe you.

Dorothy lingers... then BANGS on the wall behind her --

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Scott's gonna run through some
videos and gear with you.

SCOTT (O.S.)
What?

INT. MEETING ROOM, OFFICE - DAY

Half of Don's gear is on the table, half in a bin next to it.

SCOTT -- 35, decked out in outdoor brands and wearing toe
shoes like an asshole -- holds out a handheld radio.

SCOTT
Just got these in. New C.M.D.'s.

Don reaches for the radio, but Scott pulls it back. From his
other hand, Scott holds out a thick binder.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Manual. Read it. This puppy is
expensive. Anything happens, you're
responsible.

Don glares at Scott -- a scary, "don't fuck with me," glare.

Scott takes his tone down --

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Sorry, most wilderness monitors are
like half your age and don't show
the equipment proper respect.

Don takes only the radio from Scott's hands.

Scott puts the binder on the table. Grabs a small bag with
rope attached to it from the bin. Hands it to Don --

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Bear bag.

Don peeks inside the bag.

Scott notices Don's confusion --

SCOTT (CONT'D)
To hang your food.

Don holds up the rope like a clothesline.

DON
I got it.

Don puts the bag on the table while Scott looks at him
suspiciously.

LATER

Don, sitting backwards on a folding chair, watches a boxy TV.

ON THE SCREEN

FEMALE RANGER, 40, stands on a mountain trail.

FEMALE RANGER
Every year, trails take a beating
from the elements, and from heavy
or improper use --

BACK TO:

Scott leaves the back of the room.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Scott pops into Dorothy's office from the hallway --

SCOTT
Hey, so, this guy --

DOROTHY
(grinning)
Eddie Bauer?

SCOTT
Yeah. What the hell?

DOROTHY
He's cute, right?

SCOTT
Jesus, Dorothy.

I/E. DON'S CAR, COUNTRY HIGHWAY - DAY

Phone to his ear, Don drives his 1999 Cadillac DeVille through the picturesque San Luis Valley of southern Colorado. The distant and green San Juan Mountains to the east, the snow-capped Sangre de Cristo's to the west.

ABBY (O.S.)
... this is my new number. My reception is pretty terrible, but I really hope to hear from you soon.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

Nothing else off the rural highway. Don pulls into a gravel parking spot.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE - DAY

MOTEL ATTENDANT, 65, returns to a counter. Hands Don a key.

MOTEL ATTENDANT
You said how long?

DON
How's about we keep this open-ended?

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Boxes clutter the dated room. Handheld radio, maps, and manuals on a table.

Don takes a motel painting off the wall. Hangs a framed map in its place -- we don't get a clear look at it.

Takes a phone charger off the bed. Scans the room...

He peeks behind the headboard to see a hard-to-reach outlet.

Don gets on his knees and squeezes his arm between the wall and headboard. He blindly tries getting the charger in the outlet. The charger THWACKS against the wall a few times --

DON

Cocksucking, mother--

Slides into place.

Satisfied, Don sits on the bed. Plugs in his phone -- the screen doesn't light up. Unplugs. Replugs -- nothing.

INT. MOTEL ROOM, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Charger in the bathroom outlet, Don plugs his phone in -- the screen lights up revealing a background picture of Abby's selfie at the Red Mountain Trail lookout.

Don leaves the bathroom...

Returns with another phone charger. Plugs it in the second outlet.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

Don tries setting up an orange tent -- clearly never done it before.

Motel Attendant comes out of the office --

MOTEL ATTENDANT

You want some help with that?

INT. DINER - DAY

Don reads from a FOREST SERVICE MANUAL. There's a diagram showing how to properly secure food over a tree branch using a bear bag -- looks nothing like a clothesline.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Don crams a jacket into his backpacking pack -- no room left. He looks at the table -- plenty of gear still on it. He takes out the jacket. Starts over.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

With his phone to his ear, Don digs through a box of books --

DON
(on phone)
... six days, the fuck do people do
all that time. I got some of them
bullshit hippy books you left at
home. Finally give those a shake.

I/E. DON'S CAR, COUNTRY HIGHWAY - DAY

Don cruises toward a billboard that catches his attention:
"RIDE THE COSMIC HIGHWAY TO THE UFO WATCHTOWER. 1/2 MILE."

Past the billboard, a cop car has a truck pulled over.

EXT. ROADSIDE, COUNTRY HIGHWAY - DAY

OFFICER ALVAREZ, 38, exits his cop car. He walks up to the back of the truck. Looks in the truck's bed -- three backpacking packs.

I/E. DON'S CAR, COUNTRY HIGHWAY - DAY

Don turns right on a road heading east directly into the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. A sign reads "CRESTONE 14 MILES."

I/E. DON'S CAR, CRESTONE MAIN STREET - DAY

Don eases through the eclectic, mountain village. All kinds of unusual shops with strange architecture -- MOTHER EARTH HERBALS, CONSCIOUS HARMONICS, METAPHYSICAL JEWELRY.

He shares the road with a group of slow-walking HIPPY BACKPACKERS.

DON
(to himself)
What's this? A fuckin' parade?

HONKS his horn.

EXT. TOWN STREET, CRESTONE - DAY

Don comes to a stop sign. There's a huge wooden sign next to it -- "CRESTONE'S SPIRITUAL CENTERS" Below the heading, are over 20 different centers with directional arrows including ASHRAMS, STUPAS, and ZEN CENTERS.

I/E. DON'S CAR, DIRT ROAD - DAY

Don drives away from town up onto a dirt road. A golden monument shines through the trees.

I/E. DON'S CAR, ROUGH MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Don's big-ass Caddy shakes as it passes over the uneven dirt road. The bottom of the car SCRAPES over some rocks.

EXT. PARKING LOT, LILY LAKE TRAILHEAD - DAY

Empty dirt lot. Don staples signage to the trail board -- "RECENT BEAR SIGHTINGS." It continues on to list cautionary tips for bear safety.

EXT. LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Lush forest surrounds the narrow trail. Don reaches for his water bottle.

He looks at the winding switchbacks ahead...

EXT. LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Halfway up the switchbacks, Don is laying on his back -- pack still on -- on the side of the trail. He PANTS --

An elk BUGLES in the distance -- startling Don to his feet.

DON
The fuck is that?

EXT. LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Pack on the ground. Bear spray next to it.

Don clears some brush from the trail.

EXT. STREAM, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Don gingerly bends down to collect a water sample. He cringes as his left hand touches the muddy bank for stability.

EXT. CAMPSITE, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Tent set up with sleeping bag inside.

Don looks over a checklist. He sets it down. Pulls a smashed sandwich out of his pack.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Don finishes tying the rope of the bear bag to a rock.

He tries lobbing the rock (rope along with it) over a horizontal tree branch 20 feet above him.

The rock flies off and the rope goes nowhere.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Lit by headlamp. Don sits cross-legged inside.

He inhales deeply... Exhales...

He references an

INSERT -- OPEN BOOK

Meditation instructions on one page. The other has a sketch of Abby sitting cross-legged in a forest, both eyes closed, but she has an opened third eye on her forehead.

BACK TO:

Turns off the headlamp -- Darkness.

INHALE. With his next EXHALE --

DON
(vibrating the sounds)
AAAAAAUUUUUMMMMMM.

INHALES. EXHALE --

DON (CONT'D)
AAAAAAUUUUUMMMMMM.

INHALE. EXHALE --

DON (CONT'D)
 AAAUUUUUU IIIIII I don't fuckin'
 get this.

EXT. CAMPSITE, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Don pours some water on his hair. Slicks it back with a comb.

EXT. CAMPSITES, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Don checks out a few empty campsites. Marks a form on a clipboard.

EXT. MEADOW, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

A mountain goat munches on grass. Mesmerized, Don watches...

ALEXIS (O.S.)
 Hey! Sir!

Don turns up trail to see ALEXIS, 26, running. She looks exhausted with a t-shirt tied around her arm. She's carrying a water bottle but no pack.

Don hurries toward Alexis --

DON
 Easy hun, you okay?

Alexis hunkers over, catching her breath.

ALEXIS
 I'm fine, I'm fine.

Closer now, Alexis does a double take on Don -- white tank top and gold chain showing under his uniform -- he just doesn't look the part.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)
 Do you have a radio?

EXT. MEADOW, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Don's backpack is on the ground with an open first aid kit next to it. Sitting on a rock, Alexis wipes a gash on her arm with an alcohol wipe. She doesn't wince.

Don stands by --

ALEXIS

We started up yesterday morning. Me, my boyfriend Jackson, and our friend Ollie. We were hoping to summit Lily in one day, but by the time we got above the lake the sun was comin' down.

Alexis grabs gauze and a roll of tape. Tapes and talks --

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

We made camp and planned to summit today and pack out. Well, Jackson and I get up this morning and Ollie was gone.

DON

Gone?

EXT. MEADOW, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Don fidgets with a volume knob while transmitting on radio --

DON

... haven't seen him since last night.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

We'll contact Saguache County Sheriff's Office. They'll get a hasty team up there in a few hours. Radio back if anything changes.

DON

Will do. Over and out or something.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

What?

DON

I'm turning the thing off now.

Alexis stands up from the rock. A beanie hides her hair and extends to the top of her emaciated face.

DON (CONT'D)

I can help you down. Give you a ride to the hospital.

ALEXIS

I got just a few more miles. You should go up and help Jackson.

DON
You need any food or something?

ALEXIS
You got a car at the trailhead?

Don zips open a pocket from his pack. Pulls out keys.

EXT. LILY LAKE - DAY

Don reaches the shore of the beautiful alpine lake.

DON
(shouting)
Ollie!

A signpost has an arrow pointing up the trail -- "LILY PEAK."

EXT. ABOVE TREE LINE, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

With the lake and treeline well below, the terrain flattens.

Don WHEEZES.

A green tent flaps in the wind 30 yards ahead.

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Don approaches from behind the tent -- it suddenly tightens down from the relentless wind.

Don moves to the front where JACKSON -- 26, bearded, muscular -- pushes a stake deep into the ground.

DON
(out of breath)
You Jackson?

Startled, Jackson looks up.

JACKSON
Yeah.

DON
Your girl told me about Ollie. Any sign of him?

JACKSON
No.

Jackson stands up next to the empty, green tent.

Don points to a smaller, blue tent.

DON
That his?

JACKSON
Yeah.

They walk to the blue tent.

Don waits for Jackson to say more... he doesn't.

Don peeks inside to see a rustled sleeping bag and a pack.

DON
Well, shit.

EXT. ROCK FIELD - DAY

Don takes it slow over exposed rock with the occasional speckling of moss.

DON
(shouting)
Ollie! Ollie!

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Don shares a bag of jerky with Jackson. The glacier-patched Mount Lily towers above them.

Five men on horseback arrive -- SHERIFF BECKER, 45, Officer Alvarez, and three SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) MEMBERS. Sheriff and Alvarez are in uniform, the others in hiking gear.

SHERIFF
Jackson, any changes to the situation?

JACKSON
No.

The men dismount. SAR MEMBERS huddle up as Alvarez pulls out a map and a red marker.

SAR #1
(surprised)
Ya'll made camp up here?

Jackson joins the men.

JACKSON
 (trailing off)
 We were hoping to...

Sheriff walks away from the men toward Don. He stops 10 feet away, turns his back to Don. Unzips his pants.

SHERIFF
 Don?

DON
 Yeah.

SHERIFF
 (urinating)
 Sheriff Becker from Saguache
 County. Sure appreciate your help
 up here.

Sheriff finishes his short piss and zips up. He approaches Don with his dick-hand out for a shake.

Don doesn't shake -- grimaces at the hand instead.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
 Sorry 'bout that. Darn prostate.
 Put me on horseback, and I'm
 pissin' every ten minutes.

DON
 You know, I'm new to this, but I
 can help. Not doing much else.

SHERIFF
 Nah. We'll do a sweep and get air
 support out here early tomorrow.
 Hopefully he just got turned around
 and ends up back in town.

DON
 I got legs, and eyes, and I yell
 pretty good.

SHERIFF
 Best if you go back to your Forest
 Service responsibilities. We got it
 from here. Thank you though.

Sheriff turns away.

DON
 (under his breath but not)
 Fuckin' cop bull--

Sheriff turns back --

SHERIFF
What's that?

DON
(walking away)
I'm gonna go tro' some fuckin'
sticks off a trail.

EXT. ABOVE TREELINE, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DUSK

With the sun coming down, Don descends toward the lake.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Headlamp on, Don fills out paper work.

EXT. LILY LAKE - DAY

Don scoops a water sample from the lake as the WHINING of an engine and the BUZZING of helicopter blades get closer.

He looks up -- a low-flying helicopter glides above.

EXT. LILY LAKE - DAY

Sheriff, Alvarez, SAR Members, and Jackson head away from the high flat. Jackson rides one of the horses as SAR #1 hikes ahead of them.

DON (O.S.)
Hey, Sheriff!

Sheriff motions for the group to continue on. He turns his horse to face Don coming from a nearby campsite.

DON (CONT'D)
You's find anything?

SHERIFF
Nah.

DON
No one stayin' up there?

SHERIFF
That's the only place we know he's
not. I'll have Forest Service radio
you if anything turns up.

Sheriff heads back... then stops. He dismounts his horse. Shields himself behind a tree.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

(urinating)

Did get word Alexis is back fine.
We'll make sure your car is back at
the trailhead. Keys'll be under the
passenger seat. When you're back in
town, go ahead and stop by the
station and log an official report.

EXT. CAMPSITE, LILY LAKE - DAY

Don stands in the middle of his campsite. Looks at his tent then at the afternoon sun.

Starts taking the tent down.

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Ambient sunlight from behind the mountains vanishing quickly. The green tent and blue tent are gone. The only sign of recent visitors are a few piles of horse shit.

Don fights against the wind while setting up his tent. He lays flat with his legs inside the tent to weigh it down as he hits a stake into the ground with a rock.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

RUSTLING outside.

Don wakes. Sits up. Turns on his headlamp.

A wheezy SNORT from outside the tent.

Don freezes.

A shape presses against the tent, touching Don's back.

Spooked, Don slides to the other side of the tent.

Another SNORT right next to him.

Don scoots to the center of the tent.

SILENCE. TENSE.

The winds WHIPS.

Don pulls out bear spray.

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - NIGHT

Darkness except for the orange tent that glows from the inside like a jack-o'-lantern.

Light turns off.

Front slip slowly zips open from the inside.

Just Don's hand comes out, holding the bear spray --

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Don zips the flap down a bit more.

Waits...

RUSTLING behind him.

Don shoots out a MIST of bear spray -- but a slash of wind pushes most of it back into the tent.

Don recoils -- closing his eyes and mouth.

After a few unbearable seconds, Don yanks the zipper down and rolls out into the darkness --

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - CONTINUOUS

On all fours, Don COUGHS and SPITS.

Nearby HUFF.

Don quiets.

Turns on his headlamp --

A MOUNTAIN GOAT stares back at Don from 10 feet away. Don initially flinches, but the goat turns away from the light and calmly grazes out of view.

Don eases to his feet. Slowly turns 360 degrees -- beam of light shows 20 mountain goats surrounding his tent, none of which pay any attention to him.

DON

The fuck?

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

With the mountain goats gone and a full pack, Don looks out over the lonely, rocky terrain.

DON
Ollie!

EXT. LILY LAKE - DAY

Don wets an undershirt in the lake.

He kneels to the ground and wipes down the sprawled-out tent.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Patter of rain against the tent. Don gnaws on summer sausage and reads from a book -- "ELEVATED CONSCIOUSNESS."

EXT. LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Worn and tired, Don plods along the trail.

VOICE 1 (O.S.)
(distant)
Ollie!

VOICE 2 (O.S.)
Ollie!

Don peeps up and heads toward the voices.

EXT. LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Officer Alvarez walks up the trail. Eight VOLUNTEERS spaced out every 20 yards flank Alvarez on both sides.

BURLY VOLUNTEER on the left --

BURLY
Ollie!

Alvarez stops at Don --

ALVAREZ
You outta here?

DON
Yeah. You's going back?

SLIM VOLUNTEER on the right turns to see why they stopped but continues his shout right at Alvarez --

SLIM

Ollie!

Alvarez motions for Slim to simmer down.

ALVAREZ

Just volunteers doing a comb. Enjoy your rest.

Don nods. Moves on. Gets a few feet down trail --

HERMAN (O.S.)

Hold up, there.

HERMAN -- 47, thick mustache -- hustles over from the ranks of the search party.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

(to Alvarez)

I'll catch up.

Herman extends a hand for Don.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

Don, right?

DON

Yeah.

They shake.

HERMAN

Herman. I'm Jackson's dad.

DON

Oh, how's he doin'?

HERMAN

Little shaken up but... Look, I know you got up there first, and I just I wanted to thank you.

DON

I didn't do much.

HERMAN

Being there was plenty. Kids were probably terrified... You're new to the Valley, right?

DON

Yeah.

HERMAN

My wife and I would love to have you over for dinner, show our appreciation.

DON

No, that's not --

HERMAN

Please, I've got some steaks in from Pagosa. We're talkin' life-changing meat.

DON

It's a classy move. I admire that, but I've been out here in this fucking' jungle for days. I need some real sleep --

HERMAN

And a real meal. Saturday, seven?

Catches Don off guard --

DON

Sure.

Don tries to walk off --

HERMAN

Do you have a pen?

EXT. LILY LAKE TRAIL HEAD, PARKING LOT - DAY

Don opens the passenger side door of the Caddy to find his keys underneath.

Pops the trunk and heaves his pack inside. He spots new sign on the trail board. Approaches --

INSERT -- POSTER

MISSING

ALI ZAMAN.

AGE - 29.

LAST SEEN - 9/6/18.

The poster continues with a picture, physical description and contact information for the Sheriff's office.

BACK TO:

Don looks at the picture of ALI -- dark skin, stern face, black hair.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY / OFFICE - DAY

Don, carrying a sampling kit and folder, peeks into Dorothy's office -- empty.

Goes to the next office -- Scott seated at a desk.

SCOTT

I can take those. Gear still intact?

DON

Strangest thing, the radio... rolled it down the mountain, t'rew it in the lake. Still works.

Don hands over the folder and sampling kit.

SCOTT

I see. Dorothy's gone. She said she'd call to check-in later.

I/E. DON'S CAR, COUNTRY HIGHWAY -- DAY

Don driving while on the phone --

ABBY (O.S.)

... sounds ridiculous, you out west, but I can see it. I can. I was doing this hike today --

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Don gingerly removes his boots while talking on the phone --

DON

... so I get up there and this guy wouldn't say shit --

Call waiting BEEPS --

DON (CONT'D)

Hold on a sec --

Clicks over --

DON (CONT'D)

Who's this? ... Oh... yeah, where's that?

INT. BAR - NIGHT

An eclectic mix of COWBOYS, REGULARS, and HIPPIES. A large horseshoe bar resides in the middle with a dance floor to the left and pool tables to the right.

Dorothy and Don at a table. Dorothy's rocking some make-up and big feathered hair. Don nurses a beer while Dorothy is halfway through her second.

DOROTHY

... Alexis is a good kid. She did an internship with us a few years back. I don't know Jackson, but his dad's a swingin' dick in town.

DON

I met him. He was part of some kind of search party.

DOROTHY

'Course he was. Always politician'. He's got a surveyin' company out here, but word is he'll be runnin' for county commissioner.

Don looks out at people line dancing to COUNTRY MUSIC.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

You did good up there though. It's sort of incredible that you're here. Showin' up when you did.

Don could give a shit --

DON

You got any trails in the same area?

The music transitions to a DISCO TUNE.

DOROTHY

Mining company has an inholding on everything north of Lily. There is a trail south... we've had it on the backlog a while. Gotta warn ya, it'll need some work.

DON
I can hack it.

Dorothy stands --

DOROTHY
Just need one thing.

DON
What's that?

DOROTHY
A dance.

DON
No, I don't --

DOROTHY
Come on. If you can hack it.

Don reluctantly follows Dorothy. A COWBOY leaving the dance floor spots her --

COWBOY
(shouting)
Watch out! Here comes Dorothy!

As he passes by, Cowboy slaps Don on the back --

COWBOY (CONT'D)
Good luck, partner!

INT. DANCE FLOOR, BAR -- CONTINUOUS

Don and Dorothy get to the center of the floor. Don sways uncomfortably back and forth.

Dorothy gets in a groove immediately. She's fluid and fantastic -- creatively drifting to all corners of the floor and eventually back to Don.

DON
You can really move.

Dorothy takes Don's hand and has him spin her.

Don loosens up. He side steps and mirrors some of Dorothy's hand movements.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Don's report on a desk between him and Sheriff --

DON

... where I'm from, three people go out and two come back -- there's some fuckin' questions.

SHERIFF

These kinds of things happen 'round here from time to time. Crestone attracts a certain population. Drifters, druggies, people claiming they see things -- what is it they say? *They've been touched by the Sangres*. I've lived here my whole life, never seen nothin' but god's natural, green earth. But, hey, maybe I'm not special.

DON

Yeah, maybe not, Sheriff.

SHERIFF

You want questions... what do you know about Ollie? 'Bout all I know is he's Pakistani or somethin'. I'm not some kind of racist, but that matters.

Don's expression stays blank.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

We put a couple things out there. Got his mom up here from Phoenix -- she gave us nothin'. Jackson and Alexis, they barely knew him, and you can find their praises from here to La Jara. Hell, Alvarez even pulled 'em over mornin' before. Story checks out. You're the only other person who was up there that night. You know anything?

Sheriff takes a hard look at Don.

DON

(with a laugh)

You think I had something to do with this --

SHERIFF

No. I don't. I think a man went missing, had an accident, or hell, maybe he doesn't want to be found. We put a week into this... there ain't much more we can do.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Don flips through a sketch pad on the bed.

INSERT -- SKETCH PAD

Sketch of a massive mechanical device, like a pile of gears somehow intricately connected.

Flips the page --

Sketch of a vast ocean with dozens of rafts floating on its surface.

Flips the page --

EXT. PARKING LOT, GROCERY STORE - DAY

Don walks toward the entrance while talking on the phone --

DON

... they're supposed to be massive.
Guy who owns the motel here says
they're full-on mountains of sand --

Don notices a flyer outside the entrance.

DON (CONT'D)

(on the phone)
Just a sec...

INSERT - MISSING PERSON FLYER

It's for Ali -- but it's different than the one at the trailhead. This is handwritten and has several pictures on it showing Ali smiling. The contact information at the bottom has the Sheriff's Office and a number for "ZULFIA ZAMAN."

INT. DINER - DAY

ZULFIA, 50, scarfs on a muffin.

ZULFIA

(mouthful)
... two summers ago he was in
Indonesia. Then on a boat to New
Zealand. I did not hear from him
for months. What did I do to
deserve this? Always going... what
is he looking for?

Zulfia's tone is more annoyed than concerned.

DON
Was Ollie --

Zulfia corrects his pronunciation --

ZULFIA
Ali.

DON
Was he okay... mentally?

Zulfia laughs.

ZULFIA
You've been talking to the Sheriff?
Yes, he thinks Ali is some...
suicidal. He is plenty happy.
Plenty successful. He was selling
his jewelry out of a shop up in the
Crestone town.

Zulfia sips Coffee. Don studies her --

ZULFIA (CONT'D)
What is it?

DON
You don't... you know, seem that
worried.

ZULFIA
He is the most capable person I
know. I do not know what he is
doing, but I know he is alive.

Don hesitates...

ZULFIA (CONT'D)
Ali is a part of me. If he were not
alive, I would feel it. Can you
understand that?

DON
I can.

INT. JEWELRY STORE, CRESTONE - DAY

Crowded space featuring jewelry, artwork, and artifacts. Don looks at a collection of pendants. He goes down the line, picks up a rustic cross with a scythe at the bottom.

ALEXIS (O.S.)
Saturn's Sickle.

Don turns then smiles at Alexis -- now healthy and radiant. She has short blonde hair with light purple highlights and a brace on her wrist.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

God of Harvest and Time. And it's composed of Saturn's astrological metal.

Don compares it to the more polished pendants of gold, silver, and copper --

DON

Sorta looks like shit, don't it?

ALEXIS

It may not shine, but long ago lead was revered by alchemists.

DON

(putting pendant back)
Never been much of a drinker.

Alexis smiles at the bad joke.

DON (CONT'D)

How's the arm?

ALEXIS

Slight fracture, but it's healing up. Any word on Ollie?

DON

Not yet. He ugh... worked here, too?

ALEXIS

He was just passing through. Our owner let him sell some of his pieces out of the store. We have a few left.

Alexis leads Don to a counter.

She pulls out a display box containing a few necklaces and bracelets all of the same style -- several tiny pieces of rock all stranded together.

Don picks up a bracelet. He inspects the small shards of rock on the bracelet -- each is unique and magnificent.

DON

You know anything about him?

ALEXIS

Not really. He was only in here a few days. Jackson came up to visit. We all started talkin' about climbing --

Don glances at the price tag -- \$400.

DON

That's a fuckin' price.

ALEXIS

He makes each piece by hand. I wish he was here to tell you -- there's a story to 'em.

Don looks up, notices Alexis is wearing a necklace surely made by Ali.

DON

You been through a lot, and I'm not trying to bring all this shit up but the Sheriff and them are done looking for him. I'll be working some trails in the area... If anything comes to mind about Ali, give me a call or something.

Don hands Alexis a slip of paper.

DON (CONT'D)

My address is on there, too -- the motel off one-sixty. I don't get the best reception.

ALEXIS

It's probably nothing useful --

DON

What?

ALEXIS

We were hiking pretty fast. Ollie somehow was still talking, telling all these stories. I was cashed, so I only got every other word, but he kept bringing up this man named Cliff. Apparently he lives in a treehouse in the Baca.

DON

Baca?

ALEXIS

The Baca Grande. The rich side of
Crestone.

(laughs)

I know it sounds crazy.

Don glances back down at the bracelets. Picks one up.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Are you having dinner with Herman
and my mom tonight?

DON

He said it was just him and his
wife. How'd you know about that?

ALEXIS

Herman's married to my mom.

Don tries to process that...

DON

Wait, how's that?

INT. DINING ROOM, HOUSE - NIGHT

Don sits across from Herman and KIM -- 45, low-cut sweater
displaying a healthy amount of cleavage. Each has a glass of
wine with hearty plates of steak, taters, and veggies.

HERMAN

... sounds weirder than it is.
Jackson and Alexis started dating
way back when they were in high
school. I'm a widower, Kim was
never married. As the kids saw more
of each other, our paths crossed
more often, and it just...
happened.

KIM

Are you married? Have any kids?

DON

Divorced. A daughter, she --

HERMAN

So, you get it? Raising a kid,
gettin' older -- it's hard finding
someone.

Kim puts her hand on Herman's.

DON

Sure.

Don takes a sip of wine -- he's wearing one of Ali's bracelets on his wrist.

HERMAN

How's trail life in the Sangres? I get back their for work from time to time. Those mountains can really change a man.

DON

Surprise to me, but I hack it pretty good. Only thing is my feet, stuck in those fucking boots --

Kim smiles.

HERMAN

Oh... I know about that.
(laughs)
Too well.

INT. LIVING ROOM, HOUSE - NIGHT

Don sitting on a love seat across from Herman -- who's on a large couch and in the process of removing his shoes and socks. Each of them have a foot spa filled with water in front of them.

Two large oil diffusers pump vapor into the room.

HERMAN

Best purchase I've ever made. Come on now --

Don hesitates to take off his loafers.

Herman presses a button on his foot spa -- BUBBLES.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

This does it every time.

Don looks down at the buttons on his --

KIM (O.S.)

I'll set you up.

Kim crouches between Don's legs. She uses his knee for balance -- Don is hyper aware of the touch. He looks away from cleavage difficult to escape.

LATER

Don and Herman both have eyes closed as the foot spas BUBBLE.

Kim carries a bath towel and a bottle of oil. She sits next to Don on the small love seat.

Don opens his eyes -- slightly confused as there's more spacious seating available next to her husband.

She drapes the towel over her lap then lightly slaps it --

KIM (CONT'D)

Put 'em up.

Don hesitates...

Herman's eyes open --

HERMAN

Kim's a pro. She'll have those
hoofs feelin' brand new.

Herman shuts his eyes. Sinks deeper into the couch.

DON

I'm not trying to come off rude
here --

KIM

Then don't.

Don reluctantly turns his body to lay across the love seat, stretching his feet onto Kim's lap.

Kim dries Don's feet with a towel...

KIM (CONT'D)

Relax.

Kim squirts out some oil. Goes to work.

She lightly rubs down each foot.

Don relaxes... closes his eyes.

She focuses on the left foot, releasing pressure points along the instep with impressive technique.

DON

Wow.

Herman releases a sleepy CHUCKLE.

Kim switches to Don's right foot -- the foot closest to her body. She lifts it off her lap with her right hand. Using her left hand, she runs her pointer finger up his Achilles Tendon.

She leans closer -- her breast presses against his foot.

Don tenses -- eyes open.

He repositions back to sitting.

DON (CONT'D)

Any more and you'll put me to sleep. It's about that time for me.

Don slides his oily feet straight into his loafers.

Herman sits up.

HERMAN

Stay with us tonight. Plenty of space here.

KIM

Yeah, it'll be fun.

Don stuffs his socks into his pockets.

DON

No, no, there's... some medication I take back at the motel.

HERMAN

I might have you covered.

Herman takes a blue pill from his chest pocket. Swallows it.

Kim moves closer to Don --

KIM

Don, there's a whole other side of life I think you're missing out on.

DON

Another time, maybe.

I/E. CAR, COUNTRY HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Don drives. Eyebrows raised.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Don asleep. A book rests on his chest -- "DREAMWORK."

I/E. CAR, MOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

Don starts the Caddy. He looks around, checks his pockets --

DON
Son of a bitch.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Don enters. Goes straight to the bathroom --

Comes right out with his phone.

I/E. CAR, MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The winding road has luxurious homes tucked into the trees.

Don sneaks a peek at directions on his phone.

EXT. FOOTBRIDGE / TREEHOUSE, FOREST - DAY

Don walks across a footbridge -- 40 feet above the forest floor -- to reach a massive two-story treehouse.

He KNOCKS at the front door.

The door opens. CLIFF, 86 -- groomed white beard, perfect teeth -- he wears a hemp tank top revealing arms with lean muscle definition. His deep voice matches his virility --

CLIFF
Welcome.

INT. TREEHOUSE - DAY

The rustic exterior contrasts sharply to the psychedelic elegance of the interior. Statues, paintings, and artifacts adorn the completely open first floor. A narrow stairwell through a hole in the ceiling leads to the second.

Cliff is at a countertop covered in roots, bark, and diced plants. He takes a large knife out of a leather holster at his waist. He cuts up a few pieces of bark and puts them into a steaming pot on a wood-buring stove.

CLIFF

Tea?

DON

(distracted)

No thanks.

Don, looking at old pictures of miners in the mountains, moves on to a mural along the westward wall -- a naked man meditates among the rubble of a launch station for a space rocket. The sky above him ripples into the cosmos and strange psychedelic worlds.

Cliff approaches, holding what appears to be a mason jar filled with chunky, pond water.

CLIFF

Do you meditate?

DON

I gave it a fair shake.

CLIFF

Let's see.

DON

No, no. I'm not looking to take too much of your time --

CLIFF

(forceful)

Show me.

LATER

Don sits on the floor cross-legged and eyes closed.

DON

(vibrating the sounds)

AAAAAAUUUUUUMMMMMM.

INHALE. EXHALE --

DON (CONT'D)

AAAAAAUUUUUUMMMMMM.

INHALE. EXHALE --

Cliff watches from a nearby chair.

CLIFF

No noise. Your chest should not rise or fall. Slow. Subtle. Lull your body so your mind can ascend.

Don adjusts. He's silent... chest doesn't rise or fall.

Cliff focuses on Don --

5 seconds...

Cliff closes his eyes and joins --

10 seconds...

A slight GASP from Don brings both of their eye's open.

DON

Fuck... hard to breathe that way.

CLIFF

When you maintain that energy,
return to me for a mantra.

Don moves to a chair across from Cliff.

DON

So this kid goes missing.
Apparently he --

CLIFF

Do you know why you're looking for
Ollie?

DON

As I said, he's missing.

Cliff and Don linger in an awkward moment...

DON (CONT'D)

I don't got shit else to do.

CLIFF

People have a way of finding me.
You both came. Both searching. And
you both found me.

DON

What was Ali searching for?

CLIFF

What everyone who comes to me is
searching for. I can give you a
glimpse.

Cliff takes a small, wooden box off a table and opens it -- a
small baggie of dark yellowish powder and a pipe.

DON
Drugs. He came to you looking for
drugs. Makes sense.

Cliff shakes his head. Packs the pipe with yellow powder.

CLIFF
Synchronicity.

Cliff holds the pipe out to Don.

DON
Look, you got any idea where this
kid might be?

CLIFF
(motioning to the pipe)
Let's take a glimpse.

DON
You know, you're a real fuckin'
help.

As Don walks toward the door...

CLIFF
Return when you're ready for the
mantra.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Don packs up his gear while talking on the phone --

DON
...I'll give this guy a fucking
mantra. Drinking your nasty fucking
swamp tea in your stupid treehouse.
I'm telling you, some of these
people out here --

EXT. DOUGLAS PASS TRAILHEAD, ROADSIDE - DAY

No parking lot or trail board, just a sad trail post. His car
parked on the roadside, Don pulls his pack from the trunk.

EXT. DOUGLAS PASS TRAIL - DAY

Pile of rocks on the trail from a small rock slide.

Don GROANS.

LATER

Half the pile off the trail. Don chucks another rock away.

He looks up at the sky while wiping sweat from his forehead --

A white orb of light hovers above a mountain peak.

Don looks to the sun in a different part of the sky.

Back to the orb... it vanishes.

Don stands, dumbfounded.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Don sits up straight. Closes his eyes.

Body completely still...

His chest rises from a strong inhale. He opens his eyes.

Resets his position. Closes again.

EXT. CAMPSITE, DOUGLAS PASS TRAIL - DAY

Don jams his foot into a boot.

EXT. DOUGLAS PASS TRAIL - DAY

Dense forest surrounds Don --

DON
(shouting)
Ali! Ali!

EXT. DOUGLAS PASS TRAIL - DAY

Don meditates.

We push in on him --

EXT. GIANT FOREST - DAY (DON'S POV) -- DREAM

Massive, black trees with 30-foot diameters surround us. Their sprawling branches and vibrantly-colored leaves create a canopy above.

Speckled, white grass and fallen leaves cover the ground of this strange world.

There's a CLACK behind us --

We turn around to see THREE HUNTERS -- human in shape, but their bodies and features are covered in large leaves fastened to their bodies by vines. Each of them hold a long, curved spear.

They look toward us with curious posture...

Hunter #1 hits Hunter #2's spear with his own --

CLACK! --

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Don wakes. Turns on his side.

Headlamp turns on --

Don checks his gold watch then grabs a notebook. Opens it. Nothing is written under "9/14" or "9/15."

Groggy, he writes "2:28 AM" next to "9/16" then continues to write underneath it...

EXT. FOREST, DOUGLAS PASS TRAIL - DAY

Don unties rope from around a tree. He uses the untied end to lower his bear bag from a branch above.

EXT. DOUGLAS PASS TRAIL - DAY

Don rounds a corner -- there's a yellow tent 20 yards off-trail.

EXT. OFF TRAIL / OVERLOOK / CLEARING - DAY

Don approaches the yellow tent, carrying a "VISITOR'S SURVEY" on a clipboard.

DON

Hey there... hello?

The tent is open with just a pack inside.

Don pushes past the tent to an overlook. He looks down --

GWEN -- 38, beautiful, naked -- walks around a gold, circular blanket with sensual grace.

Don darts behind a tree.

Waits...

He peeks out --

Gwen completes the full circumference of the blanket then stops...

Don watches -- he's curious not creepy.

She tilts her head up toward the sky.

Don turns with his back to the tree...

Peeks again --

Gwen is lying on the blanket. She pushes her pelvis up into the air. Brings it back down.

She straightens her legs... slightly spreads them.

She slides her hand starting at her neck... between her breasts... above her navel... below her navel...

Shocked expression, Don sneaks back to the trail.

EXT. CAMPSITE, DOUGLAS PASS TRAIL - DAY

Don sits on a rock meditating, his tent set up behind him.

He opens his eyes... uneasy.

Looks behind him --

Gwen, clothed, is leaning against a tree watching him.

GWEN

Amazing how we can feel people
watching us.

Don stands. He offers a confused look, but Gwen -- with a firm stance and blank expression -- clearly won't buy any bullshit.

DON

(defensive)
I'm Forest Service. I saw your
tent.

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)

Just wanted to see if you'd fill
out some fucking survey. I didn't
know you were... well...

Gwen lets Don stew in abashment then motions to the rock.

GWEN

You have your transcendence, I have
mine.

A moment of tension comes... then goes with Gwen's smile.

GWEN (CONT'D)

So where's this fucking survey?

EXT. STREAM, DOUGLAS PASS TRAIL - EVENING

Gwen and Don use filter pumps to get water into their
bottles.

GWEN

... heard about that in-town. No
sign of him on this trail. Been
comin' out here a few years.
Haven't seen a soul 'til you.

Loud HUFF --

Gwen and Don look over --

A huge BLACK BEAR moseys over to the stream just 10 yards
away from them.

Don watches in terror. Gwen, behind him, watches in
amazement.

The bear laps water out of the stream. It turns its head --
seeing Don and Gwen.

Gwen gently pulls on the back of Don's pack, guiding them
backwards slowly.

GWEN (CONT'D)

(softly)
Hey, bear. Hey, bear.

The bear takes a hop step and runs off into the woods.

DON

Holy shit... ho...ly... shit.

LAUGHING, Gwen puts her hands on Don's shoulders.

EXT. CAMPSITE, DOUGLAS PASS TRAIL - NIGHT

Gwen and Don sit around a campfire.

GWEN

First time ever out of Chicago?

Don nods.

Gwen unzips her pack. Takes out a baggie of weed and some papers.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Can I ask... do you know what made you come here?

Don chews on that...

DON

I'm not sure. Change of scenery. You know, seemed like the right time.

GWEN

Yeah... as Saturn returns.

DON

Huh?

Gwen rolls up a joint.

GWEN

Every twenty-nine and a half years or so Saturn completes its orbit around the sun, returning to the location it was in when you were born. With it, an overload of cosmic energy builds, bringing the potential for change. You experienced it when you were twenty-nine, and now, what... fifty-eight? Fifty-nine? Stay healthy, you might have one more in ya'.

DON

I'm not that old.

Gwen carefully lights her joint in the campfire.

GWEN

You are. I felt your energy half a mile away.

Gwen takes a drag...

DON
 Okay... say this planet-math
 equation-bullshit exists --

Don playfully runs a hand through his hair.

DON (CONT'D)
 Just sayin', you could have guessed
 I was twenty-nine.

GWEN
 (with a smile)
 I could have guessed eighty-six.

LATER

Gwen LAUGHS hysterically --

DON
 (animated)
 ... so I fall out of the tent.
 Eventually, I get up and... no
 fuckin' joke, there had to be at
 least fifteen goats surrounding me.

Both LAUGH...

DON (CONT'D)
 We should probably get that tent of
 yours set up.

GWEN
 Let's just double up.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Don and Gwen lay side by side in sleeping bags.

DON
 I hope that fuckin' bear isn't out
 there.

GWEN
 I'm more worried about your creepy
 goats finding us.

EXT. TENT, CAMPSITE, DOUGLAS PASS TRAIL - NIGHT

Cloudy night.

Silent.

Still.

INT. TENT - DAY

CHIRPS from the surrounding forest. Don and Gwen sleep with a bit of space between them -- no evidence of funny business.

EXT. CAMPSITE, DOUGLAS PASS TRAIL - DAY

Don eats oatmeal while Gwen heaves her pack onto her back.

GWEN

When you come out, you should visit me at Olano's cafe down in Monte Vista.

DON

I'll do that.

GWEN

There's a few off-the-grid hikes I can show you. Get you caught up on mountain life.

EXT. VALLEY OVERLOOK, DOUGLAS PASS TRAIL - DAY

Don walks up to the edge of an overlook. He looks out on the vast, open Valley then down to the bracelet on his wrist.

DON

Where did you go?

INT. TENT - DAY

Don -- few days of facial scruff -- leans on his side to write in his notebook under "9/19 - 5:40 AM." The rest of the page and back of the previous page is covered in dream journal entries from the week.

I/E. DON'S CAR, DIRT ROAD - DAY

Don taps "ABBY" from RECENT CONTACTS on his phone.

DIALING...

AUTOMATED VOICEMAIL (V.O.)

The mailbox is full and cannot receive any messages at this time. Goodbye.

I/E. CAR, COUNTRY HIGHWAY - DAY

Don drives past a billboard -- "UFO WATCHTOWER NEXT RIGHT."

He continues on to pass a wooden cutout of a green alien pointing right at a crossing dirt road.

Don slows. Checks the rear view mirror. Does a U-turn on the empty highway.

EXT. PARKING LOT, UFO WATCHTOWER - DAY

Don walks toward a concrete hut with a viewing deck built above it. Behind him, a few tents and an RV reside in a camping space with a sign -- "\$10 A NIGHT."

INT. UFO WATCHTOWER - DAY

Small gift shop with alien t-shirts, posters, and souvenirs.

KATHY, 75, scoots two dogs out the front door.

KATHY

Get, get.

Don enters through the back.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Afternoon.

DON

This might sound weird. A few days ago, I saw something in the sky over in the Sangres.

KATHY

Seen plenty of weird. But nothin' in the last ten days. You should have a flip through the binders.

EXT. VIWEING DECK, UFO WATCHTOWER - DAY

Sitting on old patio furniture, Don slowly flips through a binder. Hundreds of laminated pages -- handwritten accounts, printed out e-mails, sketches. Another binder at his feet.

Kathy eases up the stairs and offers Don a soft drink.

DON

Thanks.

KATHY

You should come back at night. No light pollution this far out. We've had one hundred and twenty-seven sightings right here.

DON

Sightings of what?

Don waits for it... Kathy indulges --

KATHY

Lot of people think it's military 'round here, and they're right for some of it. I've seen a C-One-Thirty fly right into Mount Blanca. Straight into it.

Kathy points to the distant Mount Blanca. Though part of the Sangre's, the Blanca Massif is south of the main range.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Military base in there, no doubt. Come down a minute, I'll show you the garden.

EXT. ROCK GARDEN, UFO WATCH TOWER - DAY

Don and Kathy walk through the rock garden -- hundreds of rocks aesthetically placed. Among the rocks are countless items: keys, pictures, shoes, stuffed animals.

KATHY

I've had six psychics come here over the years. Two of them told me there's a spaceship buried right here fifty feet below us. Now these two came separate, didn't know each other, but they both described it the same way: over a mile long, covered in moss, and still active.

DON

(polite, not buying it)
That's incredible.

KATHY

Sure, but you know what all six told me?

Kathy leads Don to the center of the garden. She points to a pile of rocks that's surrounded by personal trinkets.

KATHY (CONT'D)

All of 'em said there's a vortex
right here.

DON

What's that?

KATHY

Some kind of energy cluster.
They're all over the Sangres. What
do you think brings all them
spiritual folk to Crestone? There
ain't nothin' else around here.

Don motions to the trinkets --

DON

And all this?

KATHY

Things visitors leave behind. Ties
their spirit here. Not many people
come around anymore, but... what's
amazing is, the stuff never moves.
There's love letters and birthday
cards that have stayed right here
in the garden during spring wind.

LATER

Alone, Don slowly walks around the garden...

He looks at a few items -- a dog collar, a watch, an old
Christmas ornament.

LATER

Back at the vortex pile, Don takes Ali's bracelet off his
wrist. He bends down and sets it on the pile.

He starts to stand up --

Stops.

He reaches into his pocket. Pulls out a cell phone with a
flower-patterned case and a cracked screen.

Sets the phone down on the pile.

INT. MOTEL - DAY

Bright daylight pushes in through the closed blinds. Don
still asleep.

INT. MOTEL - DAY

Don looks through food on his table -- overripe banana, few sad pieces of bread left in the loaf.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Don -- well-dressed and clean shaven -- sits at a table. A few scattered PATRONS but no workers in sight.

He watches the door back to the kitchen --

Door swings open -- male SERVER carrying two dishes.

Don's eyes shift down to his table.

Server drops off the dishes at another table then hands Don a menu -- "OLANO'S CAFE"

INT. MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

TV on, but Don isn't watching. Phone RINGS from the bathroom.

Don gets up, rounds the corner into the bathroom --

DON (O.S.)
Hello... shit, I forgot. I can
bring it by... oh, yeah that works.

I/E. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Don opens the door -- he's holding a water testing kit and folder for a quick handoff -- but Dorothy strides into the room.

Don takes a second look outside.

DON
Where'd you park?

DOROTHY
Yonder. Don't need these people
chirpin' on Dorothy Winters
shackin' up at the inn.

DON
Shacking?

DOROTHY

Donnie, I'm buzzin' like a bee
right now. Let me rest this off
before I head up to Moffat.

Dorothy holds out a styrofoam cup with a thick straw, while
sippin' a shake of her own.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

From Fritz's. Best shakes in the
Valley.

Don sets the testing kit and folder down. Accepts the shake.

Dorothy moseys over to the map on the wall -- it's covered
with 30 or so push pins all over the United States. One in
southern Colorado --

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

There we are...

There's a piece of paper pinched between the map and its
frame. It's covered in creases as if it's been folded up. On
it is a list of cities written in elegant calligraphy,
including "CRESTONE, COLORADO" at the top. "SPRINGDALE, UTAH"
has a decorative check mark next to it near the bottom.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Be nice if you wrote your reports
like that.

Don sips the shake -- Cringes with a COUGH.

Dorothy pulls a small bottle of rum from her back pocket.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Gave ya a little spice.

Dorothy slips off her shoes and plops on the bed.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

What are we watchin'?

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Don looks over at Dorothy -- sprawled out on top of the
covers.

He closes his eyes.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Three loud KNOCKS on the door.

Don comes to. Checks the clock -- "4:04 a.m."

Two more KNOCKS.

Dorothy GROANS.

Don gets up. Cracks the door --

EXT. MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

It's Alexis -- decked out in warm outerwear. She's holding the slip of paper Don gave to her.

DON

Alexis...

ALEXIS

Sorry, I tried calling --

Don slips out into the cold and closes the door.

DON

No, no it's fine. What's going on?

ALEXIS

It's about Ollie. I'm going back up.

DON

Look, he's not up there. I was on Lily that whole week. The Sheriff's office did a full --

ALEXIS

That's not where we were.

Door opens behind them --

DOROTHY

The hell is going on -- Alexis?

ALEXIS

Dorothy?

DON

(to Alexis)

This isn't what it looks like --

DOROTHY
It isn't what?

ALEXIS
I think I'm gonna go.

DOROTHY
No. Everybody inside.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dorothy sits on the bed -- hair an absolute mess -- rubs her eyes during a yawn.

Don and Alexis stand --

ALEXIS
Ollie invited Jackson and I to check out some strange place in the Sangres he heard about.

FLASH INSERT -- On the side of the country highway, Alvarez approaches a truck with three backpacking packs in the bed.

ALEXIS (V.O.)
On the way out there, we get pulled over.

BACK TO:

ALEXIS
Jackson told the cop we were in a hurry to summit Lily, and he let us off.

FLASH INSERT -- Jackson, Alexis, and ALI hike the mining trail.

ALEXIS (V.O.)
We got out on this hike -- took us all day and into the night.

BACK TO:

ALEXIS
Finally made it up to this clearing... I can't explain it, but something felt off.

FLASH INSERT -- Ali (no pack) walks out into the darkness... He looks back...

ALEXIS (CONT'D)
 Ollie went into the clearing,
 and... look, it was dark, but...

BACK TO:

DOROTHY
 But what?

ALEXIS
 He vanished. And I mean, he was
 right in front us.

Don's expression doesn't change. He waits for Alexis to
 continue --

ALEXIS (CONT'D)
 Jackson and I freaked out. We were
 outside the National Forest so
 technically trespassing. That cop
 already saw Ollie with us and heard
 a different story. We were scared
 and paranoid. We thought we had to
 be at Lily.

FLASH INSERT -- Alexis holds the back of Ali's pack while
 Jackson holds the front. They hike through the dark, unblazed
 wilderness.

ALEXIS (V.O.)
 So Jackson and I took all of
 Ollie's gear, went off trail, and
 hiked the entire night over the
 ridge.

BACK TO:

ALEXIS
 When you saw me the next morning, I
 had probably hiked forty miles.

DON
 That's why you needed my car. Yours
 was still at the other spot.

Alexis nods.

ALEXIS
 We told Herman and my mom. They
 said to keep quiet and let it pass.
 Jackson now denies to me that it
 even happened. I already lied to
 the police...
 (MORE)

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Look, I'm going up there. Today.
I'll go alone, but I'd rather not.

Alexis looks to Don then to Dorothy.

DOROTHY

Thirty years working in the
Sangre's. I've heard things. I've
seen things. It's not that I don't
believe you, but, it's been weeks.
He's not gonna be up there.

ALEXIS

I know. But it's all I think about.

DON

I'll go.

Don sits on the bed next close to Dorothy -- shoulder to
shoulder. He looks over at her...

Dorothy SIGHS... she puts her hand on top of Don's.

DOROTHY

I got gear in my car.

I/E. DON'S CAR, COUNTRY HIGHWAY - SUNRISE

Don driving. Dorothy shotgun. In back, Alexis points to the
right. The car slows. They turn onto an unmarked, dirt road.

ALEXIS

Up here.

EXT. DON'S CAR, MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Caddy pulls off to the side of a rough, mountain road.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD / MINING TRAIL - DAY

Road narrows into a trail. Don inspects old signs -- one
barely standing, another he lifts off the ground: "RESTRCITED
AREA" and "LOXTON MINING."

EXT. MINING TRAIL - DAY

Don, Dorothy, and Alexis hike up an overgrown trail.

EXT. STREAM, MINING TRAIL - DAY

Don and Alexis filter water into their bottles. Dorothy dunks her bottle straight into the stream.

EXT. MINING TRAIL / TUNNEL - NIGHT

Don, Alexis, and Dorothy stand in front of a towering rock face. Their headlamps illuminate a crude tunnel cutting through it.

Alexis takes a shirt out of her pack. She gracefully swaddles it around her face.

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

Alexis leads -- her headlamp shines through the tunnel, showing no end in sight. Flying insects cross in and out of the beam. Behind her, Dorothy wears a balaclava and Don has the crotch of a pair of pants covering his face with the pant legs tied behind his head.

They creep through... the soft SHUFFLING of rock.

EXT. TUNNEL EXIT / MINE TRAIL - NIGHT

Alexis, Dorothy, and Don emerge from the tunnel -- Dense forest bisected by a narrow trail.

EXT. FOREST / CLEARING - NIGHT

The trail ends. Alexis continues into the forest's foliage.

Branches THWACK into Don after brushing against Dorothy.

A light shines directly into Don's face --

It's Alexis' headlamp.

ALEXIS

We're here.

Don and Dorothy push even with Alexis to look at a clearing in the middle of the forest thirty yards in diameter.

Dorothy's beam of light follows the border of the clearing --

Alexis drops her pack.

DOROTHY

What now?

ALEXIS

We wait.

EXT. FOREST / CLEARING - NIGHT

Don and Dorothy -- packs off -- huddle close against a tree.

In front of them, Alexis stares out into the clearing.

LATER

A faint, rhythmic PERCUSSION breaks the silence. Multiple orchestrated sources --

CLANG... CLANG... CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG. CLANG... CLANG...

Dorothy looks in every direction trying to find the source. The CLANGS ring out like pieces of metal colliding.

DON

What the fuck is that?

CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG.

ALEXIS

Sssh... it's coming.

Slightly louder -- CLANG... CLANG...

DON

What's coming?

Alexis motions for them to follow -- she scurries to a nearby fallen tree. Dorothy takes Don's hand and they follow. They get low, hiding behind it with their backs to the forest.

CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG.

Closer, louder, from all directions -- CLANG... CLANG...

Alexis turns off her head lamp -- total darkness.

CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG.

RUSTLING of leaves and CRACKING of branches joins in as the percussion closes in --

CLANG... CLANG...

Dorothy turns to Don --

DOROTHY
(whisper)
Stay close.

CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG.

The percussion pulls even with them. One source to the left, another to the right.

CLANG... CLANG...

Don drops as low as possible to the ground.

Two FIGURES, barely visible in the darkness, march past -- one ten yards to the left of the fallen tree, the other ten yards to the right. Each of them hit two, short pipes together --

CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG.

The Figures continue into the clearing, out of visibility.

Silence...

CLANG!

Silence again.

Don leans his neck forward trying to see further.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Don, I need you to stand up slowly
and listen to what I say.

Don turns to Dorothy --

A pistol points right at him.

Don freezes... can't find words.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Don't talk. Just listen and you
won't get hurt.

Alexis walks past carrying Don's pack.

ALEXIS
We need you, Don. And you need us.

Alexis continues walking into the clearing's darkness.

Dorothy stands up, keeping the pistol on Don.

DON
The fuck is this?

DOROTHY
Don't talk. Stand up. Now, I know
this seems crazy.

Don stands.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
We're going to walk nice and easy
to the center of the clearing.

She motions her pistol towards the clearing.

Don takes the direction and walks forward.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
He said you'd find us. Claimed he
saw it. I heard that for years...
and then, just a few weeks out -- I
tell ya, this thing has a funny
sense of timing.

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

After a few paces, Don steps over a large trench that
surrounds the entire clearing.

There's a still FIGURE 10 yards to his right and another
FIGURE a few yards to his left along the trench's perimeter.

DOROTHY
Watch for the stumps.

Don keeps his head down. With the ground barely visible, he
steps over a small tree stump.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Few feet ahead, there's going to be
a small patch of grass. Sit on top
of it. Not in front of it, not to
the side -- right on top of it.

Don takes a few steps. Bends down. Drags his hand across
dirt... his fingers find long blades of grass.

He sits.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Don't move. Don't make a sound and
you'll be okay. I promise.

Keeping the gun on Don, Dorothy moves behind him, backpedaling into the darkness.

Don sits, waits...

5 seconds...

10 seconds...

Don turns his head, trying to see anything -- it's only darkness.

15 seconds...

CLANG!

Don's body jerks. The many sources of the unison sound completely surround him.

Don's breathing intensifies --

RUSTLING all around -- CRUNCHING leaves and SNAPPING twigs.

The sounds get softer... further away.

A hand lands on Don's shoulder --

BURLY

Let's go.

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

Burly and Slim guide Don. Both with headlamps, Slim is in front of Don while Burly trails -- holding a ten-foot rope that's tied around Don's waist.

BURLY

You want some water, Don? We got a ways to go.

Don turns to Burly's light --

DON

Don't fucking talk to me like you know me. You fucking animals... What the fuck is this?

Burly takes a sip of water. Hands the bottle out toward Don.

SLIM (O.S.)

Can I get a sip of that?

Don glares at Burly's kind face... he takes the bottle.

SLIM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I got mud in mine.

EXT. TRAIL / SHELTER ENTRANCE - DAY

Sun just starting to rise.

Slim, Burly, and Don come out of the forest onto a gravel drive. An off-road vehicle (four-seat RZR Side by Side) is parked next to a storm shelter built into the ground.

Slim opens the shelter door.

INT. SHELTER STAIRWELL - DAY

Don follows Slim down, getting 20 feet underground. At the bottom of stairs, a door to the left and a door to the right flank a small landing.

Slim unlocks the door to the right.

INT. BETWEEN ROOM, SHELTER - DAY

Don enters a tiny room with a tray on the floor and another locked door.

Slim picks up the tray. Unlocks the next door.

Don follows Slim into the next room --

INT. SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

Huge open space. Rugs and animal skins cover the concrete floor. Psychedelic and sexual artwork adorns the walls.

A couch, two beds, loaded bookcases, two mountain bikes on stationary stands, two rowing machines --

And then there's Ali -- 29, mocha skin and sweeping black hair. At a table, he reads a book while eating a hearty breakfast.

DON
Ali?

Ali looks up from his book.

A door SHUTS --

Don turns around to see Cliff walking into the room.

DON (CONT'D)

Of course, this fucking guy. What's this about?

CLIFF

It's about you... and me, and Ali.
Our energy. Our return.

Burly enters, pistol on Don.

Cliff motions to Burly to lower his gun.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

We didn't have the time to do this the right way. You may feel like a prisoner, but rest assured, after this... you'll never be more free. But there's work for the three of us. Each day, sunrise and sunset. Get nourished. Rest. I'll see you both this evening.

Slim, Burly, and Cliff leave the room. Lock TURNS from the outside.

Don walks over to the table. Ali still eating --

ALI

The food is actually really good.

INT. SHELTER

Don devours eggs, bacon and toast across from Ali.

ALI

No, no, these scoundrels... store owner lets me post up in-shop for a few days. Alexis starts chattin' me up. I let her do some horoscope reading, and then she was really about it -- straight parched.

DON

Parched?

ALI

Thirst status. Thirsty. She was --

DON

I got it.

ALI

Next day her brother comes in --

DON
Step-brother. And boyfriend.

ALI
What? Jackson?

DON
Yeah.

ALI
(disgusted)
Oh... she was... that's cold.
(refocuses)
Anyway, Jackson comes to the shop
and tells us about --
(motions toward door)
this father-time-cat who lives in a
tree-castle. We all go check it
out. Cliff starts talkin'
spirituality and is being super
Cliff-like. But then old boy busts
out some DMT. Alexis and Jackson
seemed down, but I've never been
into drugs --

Ali twists shards of rock on his bracelet as he continues --

ALI (CONT'D)
Point of all this is, before we
leave, Cliff tells us about this
land he owns back in the mountains.
He buried some stuff back in the
day, didn't think he'd be able to
get it down. So, he asked us to do
it, and he'd slide us a little cut.
A few days later, we headed out,
and by about midnight I'm
surrounded by a bunch of weirdos
banging pipes together.

Don's focus is entirely on Ali's bracelet.

ALI (CONT'D)
How'd they get you up here?

Don looks up at the young, hopeful Ali.

DON
Story's about the same. Down to the
thirsty women.

ALI
They're out here.

Don surveys the room.

DON
There's gotta be some way out of
here.

ALI
I spent my first four days looking.
It's air tight.

INT. BATHROOM, SHELTER - DAY

Don stands outside a hunting-cabin-styled shower with a towel
around his waist.

He opens a plastic container to find a toothbrush,
toothpaste, and other toiletries.

INT. SHELTER

Don, wearing brand new sweats, sleeps on a bed.

The shelter door OPENS -- waking Don.

Cliff enters with Burly then eases himself down to a rug.

CLIFF
Come.

Burly stands by, pistol in-hand.

Don and Ali make their way over.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Sit. We're going to make a triangle
here with a few feet between us.

Don and Ali sit -- Cliff takes out a compass and aligns
himself north.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Counter-clockwise from me should be
Ollie.

Don and Ali switch spots.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Cross your legs. Forearms on your
thighs, wrists on your knees, palms
open.

Slim enters carrying a large hula hoop.

SLIM

Found it.

Don and Ali trade confused glances.

INT. DOROTHY'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheriff sits across from Dorothy.

DOROTHY

We had a meeting for all the trail workers yesterday. He didn't show up. No answer on his phone. Waited a day, same thing. Nothin' I'm worried about. It was Scott that called it in. He's a little worked up about the gear being missin'.

SHERIFF

Think he skipped town?

DOROTHY

Don't know. I checked in with him a few days ago... yeah, it was Saturday. That was the last time I spoke to him. I really couldn't guess where he'd be.

EXT. TRAIL / SHELTER ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Don and Ali -- blindfolded, hands zip-tied behind their backs, rope leashes -- emerge from the shelter behind Cliff.

Cliff opens the door of the off-road vehicle.

CLIFF

Ten paces towards me.

Don and Ali cautiously stumble forwards as Burly exits the shelter holding the end of their leashes.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Sheriff KNOCKS on the door.

SHERIFF

Don, it's Sheriff Becker, you there?

EXT. OFF-ROAD VEHICLE - NIGHT (DON'S BLINDFOLDED POV)

Darkness but for a smidge of dim light at the bottom of the blindfold.

WHIRRING of the engine. The vehicle shakes from the terrain.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE - NIGHT

Sheriff at a counter with Motel Attendant behind it.

SHERIFF

... know anything about him? Think he's stayin' in room eight.

MOTEL ATTENDANT

He pays. That's 'bout it.

SHERIFF

Can I get a key?

EXT. OFF-ROAD VEHICLE - NIGHT (DON'S BLINDFOLDED POV)

In an instant, the WHIRRING lessens. The ride becomes smooth as if driving across a flat beach.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Lock turns.

Sheriff enters. Finds some Forest Service maps and handbooks along with Don's radio on a table.

He glances over a few boxes filled mostly with clothes then spots a notebook on the night stand. He quickly flips through it to an empty page.

Scribbles a note. Rips it out. Leaves the note on the bed.

Notebook in hand, Sheriff heads for the door...

Stops.

Sheriff tucks the notebook under his armpit. Turns back for the bathroom.

INT. MOTEL ROOM BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff unbuckles. Cringes as he urinates...

Looks down at the sink to see Don's phone charging.

EXT. OFF-ROAD VEHICLE - NIGHT (DON'S BLINDFOLDED POV)

DARKNESS.

Engine STOPS. Vehicle doors OPEN. Suspension SQUEAKS.

CLIFF (O.S.)

Wait here.

FOOTSTEPS trudging through sand get further away until...

Silence.

ALI (O.S.)

(concerned)

Don?

DON (O.S.)

I'm here.

ALI (O.S.)

What are they going to do to us?

DON (O.S.)

I don't know.

Ali's breath is audible, panicked.

DON (CONT'D)

Stay calm. Just... talk to me. Your bracelet -- you made that?

ALI (O.S.)

Yeah, I sell them.

DON (O.S.)

I saw one at the shop. Goin' for like four hundred bucks. I heard there's some kind of story behind them.

ALI (O.S.)

Yeah, I don't think that --

DON (O.S.)

(forceful)

Tell me it.

Beat.

ALI (O.S.)
 (voice bit shakey)
 Okay... when I was real young, my
 dad would come home from work and
 we'd do dinner with my mom. Then he
 would go downstairs -- I didn't
 really see much of him.

FLASH INSERT -- JAHAN, 47, comes out of the basement
 stairwell. Approaches YOUNG ALI, 10, doing homework at a
 table.

ALI (V.O.)
 (voice stabilizes)
 One night, he came upstairs out of
 nowhere, sort of acting funny. He
 told me he wanted to show me
 something.

FLASH INSERT -- Workshop with a central work table holding a
 huge, navy rock. Shelves everywhere -- covered in smaller
 rocks. Young Ali, amazed, enters behind Jahan.

ALI (V.O.)
 He opens up the locked part of the
 basement, and it's this huge
 workshop and mineral collection.
 Then on, I'd finish my homework
 each night and go downstairs with
 him.

FLASHING IMAGES -- Young Ali and Jahan at a FLEA MARKET... an
 ESTATE SALE... hiking in a CANYON.

ALI (V.O.)
 Weekends we would go to flea
 markets, estate sales, and even out
 into the backcountry to look for
 new specimens.

BACK TO:

ALI (O.S.)
 But ugh... he died when I was a
 teenager.

FLASH INSERT -- Ali (shorter hair) wandering around the
 workshop. Huge, navy rock still on table.

ALLI (V.O.)
 'Bout ten years later, my mom
 wanted to move into a smaller house
 and she let me decide what to do
 with the collection.

BACK TO:

ALI (O.S.)
 He had this thing he spent so much
 time on and loved so much, but he
 never showed anyone. I didn't know
 what to do with it... then it hit
 me.

FLASH INSERT -- Ali in a storage unit lit by a lamp. Huge,
 navy rock smashed to bits along side tools on a table. Ali
 strings shards of rock onto a strong thread.

ALI (V.O.)
 I moved them all to a storage unit,
 got a rock hammer, a drill, and
 figured it out.

FLASHING IMAGES -- Ali selling on a BUSTLING URBAN STREET...
 asleep on a FISHING BOAT... walking through a BAZAAR...
 smiling as he holds up a bracelet telling an OLD WOMAN about
 it on a TRAIN.

ALI (V.O.)
 I've been moving them all over,
 near and far. It's like, he may
 never know how much that time meant
 to me... but at least --

BACK TO:

DON (O.S.)
 He knew.

SHUFFLING SAND approaching...

Doors CLICK open.

EXT. SAND DUNES - NIGHT (DON'S BLINDFOLDED POV)

SHIFTING SAND. LABORED BREATH.

CLIFF (O.S.)
 Sit here.

JOSTLING FABRIC as they struggle to the ground.

CLIFF (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Breathe. Deep and slow --

EXT. SAND DUNES / SKY - NIGHT (DON'S POV)

Blindfold yanks off --

The stunning rift of the Milky Way stretches across the starlit sky.

EXT. SAND DUNES - NIGHT

Ali and Don sit atop a massive sand dune -- Cliff and Burly stand behind them.

Both Ali and Don shift their gaze to the right of the cosmic streak and focus on a part of the sky with a few isolated bright specks.

CLIFF
Brethren, it's almost here.

Ali and Don continue to stare...

Cliff picks up a handful of sand. Looks at the same part of the sky.

Burly holds out a lead bowl -- Cliff drops his sand inside.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Take some sand. When you feel the bowl beneath your hand, release it.

Don and Ali pick up sand behind their backs --

DON'S POV -- NIGHT'S SKY

Focuses on a single golden light, low in the sky.

RUSTLING of Burly crouching behind him.

SOFT SPLASH of sand.

The single golden light --

EXT. SKY BRIDGE - DAY -- DREAM (DON'S POV)

We're on a narrow, open, sky bridge. We can see one end of it that attaches to a massive, rectangular structure floating in the hazy, gray sky two hundred yards away.

We move towards the structure --

INT. SHELTER

Don wakes. Rolls on his side. Shuffles, looking for something...

Realizes where he is. Rolls back over.

INT. BETWEEN ROOM / SHELTER

Don picks up a tray of food off the ground. Shuts the door behind him. Walks over to the table where Ali waits.

Don WINCES as he sets the tray on the table then sits.

ALI

You good?

DON

Back's fuckig' sore from that shit-
heep bed.

Ali grabs a plate of ham steak and potatoes from the tray.

Don watches as Ali saws into the thick ham with plastic cutlery, bracelet swinging on his wrist.

DON (CONT'D)

You know, I was thinking about that
story and your bracelets.

ALI

Yeah?

DON

Touching stuff. I still think
they're about three-hundred and
seventy-five dollars too much.

Ali cracks a smile.

INT. SHELTER

Don and Ali in the Cobra yoga position.

DON

Fuck, don't tell me you're in on
this.

ALI

No. But, can you tell me you didn't feel that shit last night? Like, I know these marks are crazy, but... is there something about us?

DON

We were new to the area. No family or friends around -- just easy targets.

ALI

But for what?

Ali moves to his knees and stretches on all fours.

DON

(to Ali's new position)
Not doin' that.

Don sits up.

DON (CONT'D)

Look, whatever they have planned ends with us either dead or back in this room.

ALI

Yeah, I'm hip to that. But what do we do?

DON

Keep playing nice. All we know is what we're practicing. Hopefully we're doing this back outside. Let them get into it, lull 'em down. I'm gonna reach out and touch you. You feel that, count to five then bolt. Don't stick together. Go as fast as you can.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheriff reads from Don's notebook. Alvarez comes in --

SHERIFF

Listen to this -- I'm in some huge room made completely of glass. The floor, the ceiling, and all the walls. There's hundreds of floating glass shelves holding these things that look like plates --

ALVAREZ
That's nothin'.

Alvarez takes Don's phone out of his pocket.

SHERIFF
You get in?

ALVAREZ
Pretty easy when you don't use a passcode. Call from Dorothy checks out. He made several calls to a number with a Salt Lake area code. I tried it -- got one of those mailbox is full recordings. He did have a saved message in his voicemail.

Alvarez taps the phone's screen. Puts the phone on the desk.

AUTOMATED VOICEMAIL --
First saved message sent Thursday,
May Thirtieth at Eight Thirty-Four
p.m. --

ABBY (V.O.)
Hey, Dad. Ma said she called and gave you the basics. I know she's probably the last person, besides me, you wanted to hear from.

MONTAGE -- ABBY'S VOICEMAIL PLAYS OVER THE FOLLOWING...

-- Don, Ali, and Cliff meditate on the rug with Burly watching. In a triangular formation, together they balance a hula hoop on their hands --

-- Don and Ali using the row machines. Both in a full sweat. Ali pushes the pace. Don tries to match --

-- Ali reads on the couch. Don takes two bananas off a tray. Tosses one to Ali. Picks a book off the shelf --

-- Don studies a mural on the wall: a naked man and naked woman in a dark, decaying forest. A large, vibrant apple hangs from a withered branch. The apple's exterior is a bright red, but gradually transitions to look like the cosmos at its interior --

-- Don sitting on the rug alone. Not meditating, his eyes are open. The voicemail he's listened to so many times plays in his head.

ABBY (V.O.)

You might be mad or disappointed with who I am and what I'm doing, but I still love you. I said some pretty terrible things when I left... I think about it everyday. You know I didn't mean any of that. And I hope you know, Chicago... I tried that life -- not just for you, but for both of us. Maybe you could come out here and try this one for me. I made a list of a bunch of places I want to see. You could come... sounds ridiculous -- you out west, but I can see it. I can. I was doing this hike today. I texted you a picture -- I got near the top and all of sudden... Dad, it was like you were there. For a second, I was so scared. I thought... well, I don't know. But right then I felt everything you had for me, and it was all love. No anger, no disappointment... all I want is for one day you to feel that from me.

(sniffle from crying)

Just talk to me again. Please, Dad. Please call me. This is my new number. My reception is pretty terrible, but I really hope to hear from you soon.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Alvarez reaches for the phone --

AUTOMATED VOICEMAIL

End of message. To --

ALVAREZ

She was a trail monitor in Utah. Died in a car wreck the day after she left this.

INT. SHELTER

Don still sitting on the carpet alone...

Ali approaches --

ALI
You good, boss?

Don snaps to --

DON
Yeah.

Don adjusts to stand.

Ali puts out a hand and pulls Don to his feet.

INT. SHERIFF'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cozy in a recliner, Sheriff sips a beer while reading Don's police report on Ali's disappearance.

INT. SHELTER

Lights are out.

Door CREAKS open.

LIGHTS flash on -- Cliff, bundled in outerwear, looks upon Ali and Don as they wake.

They look back at him...

Cliff solemnly nods --

SLIM (O.S.)
(shouting)
Have you seen my other boot?

EXT. PARKING LOT, LILY CREEK TRAILHEAD - DAY

Sheriff pulls up to find one vehicle parked -- Don's Caddy.

Sheriff gets out of his car, breath visible in the early morning cold.

Peeks into Don's Caddy -- empty.

Sheriff takes out his phone. Dials. Waits...

SHERIFF
(on phone)
Call me back. His car is at the
Lily trailhead.

EXT. MINE TRAIL, FOREST - DAY

The leaves changing to yellows and oranges.

Cliff marches through thick forest with trekking poles.

Behind Cliff, Don and Ali take small steps up the steep trail, each with a rope tied around their waist that leads back to Burly and Slim.

EXT. PARKING LOT, LILY CREEK TRAILHEAD - DAY

Sheriff checks his watch -- 9:12

Dials with one hand, opens vehicle door with the other.

SHERIFF

(on phone)

Whenever he gets in tell him to
come out here. I'm headin' up.

Pulls a pack from the vehicle.

EXT. MEADOW, MINE TRAIL - DAY

Sunlight cascades down on Don and Ali.

EXT. LILY LAKE TRAIL - DAY

Sheriff starts up the switchbacks.

EXT. MINE TRAIL - DAY

Don and Ali sitting under a tree -- the only tree around with red leaves.

Cliff struggles to catch his breath.

Burly notices.

Cliff forces a smile.

CLIFF

I'm fine.

EXT. LILY LAKE - DUSK

Sheriff walks across the lake's shore --

SHERIFF
(shouting)
Don! Don!

Sheriff looks up at the steep ascent waiting for him.

EXT. MINE TRAIL - NIGHT

Don tries to bend over to catch his breath, but his rope-leash pulls taught.

DON
Little slack here?

Burly moves closer to Don, giving him slack.

BURLY
Sorry.

Cliff sits on the ground against a tree. He's completely bundled with no part of him exposed. Slim attends to him.

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - NIGHT

Sheriff spots Don's orange tent 30 yards ahead...

EXT. MINING TRAIL - NIGHT

Distant amber flickers between the trees -- the sight rejuvenates Cliff. He presses on with pace.

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - NIGHT

Sheriff approaches Don's tent --

SHERIFF
Don. Hey, Don.

Nothing...

Sheriff crouches down and unzips the tent's fly --
Don's pack at one end. His sleeping bag rolled out.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
Great.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Cliff, Burly, Don, Slim, and Ali come out of the forest into the clearing.

Huge logs burn in the trench surrounding the clearing -- creating a ring of fire with powerful flames. There's a small gateway in the circle with no flames.

They walk through the gateway. Burly and Slim let go of the rope leashes.

Burly picks up a lead bar from the ground and uses it to push flaming logs over the gateway, completing the fire circle.

Six clusters of goat skins are spread out in the circle. With the fire to their backs, nine MEDITATORS sit with their heads down -- forming a perimeter. Half of these Meditators have lead cups sitting in front of them.

Cliff leads Ali and Don to the center. A thick, lead wire encircles the central patch of grass -- like a thin hula hoop with a five-foot diameter.

Cliff
Sit here.

Don and Ali align themselves as if they were creating their meditation triangle.

Burly pulls the lead bowl from his pack. Hands it to Cliff.

Cliff tosses sand out of the bowl, spreading it all over the clearing. He sits to complete their triangle.

Burly sits out front, filling a gap in the Meditators' perimeter. Sets a lead cup in front of himself.

Slim hands Cliff a lead cup, a lead spoon, and a bottle of water. With his hands free, Slim removes a pistol from a holster and joins the meditating perimeter in back.

Ali reaches for the circular wire --

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Not yet.

Don and Ali share a confused glance.

Cliff hits the spoon against the cup creating a quiet CLANG.

Meditators' heads come up -- Burly, Dorothy, Herman, Kim, Jackson, Alexis, Alvarez, and Gwen.

Don turns his head to see Slim along with one RITUAL MAN and one RITUAL WOMAN completing the circle behind him.

The five women each walk to a separate cluster of goatskins.

They disrobe.

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - NIGHT

Sitting on his pack, Sheriff takes a Kelly Kettle off the burner. Pours steaming liquid into a small cup.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Down to panties and sports bra, Dorothy holds sensual eye contact with Don as she pulls her sports bra over her head. Trying to escape her gaze, Don looks to the right only to find Gwen doing the exact same.

The naked women all kneel on their respective goat skins.

Cliff hits the cup with the spoon -- CLANG.

The men pick up their cups. Each approach a different woman: Burly to Dorothy, Herman to Kim, Alvarez to Gwen, Jackson to Alexis, Ritual Man to Ritual Woman. Pistol-toting Slim stands alone on a goat skin.

The men set the cups down next to their partner.

The men disrobe.

ALI

The fuck...

The men take half the time and exhibit half the grace.

The naked men kneel on the skins facing their partner -- Slim kneeling alone.

Cliff hits the cup with the spoon -- CLANG.

The couples all shut their eyes and drop their heads.

5 seconds...

CLANG!

The women fall to their backs, the men come down on top of them.

Alvarez and Gwen kiss. Burly and Dorothy get straight to it.

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - NIGHT

Sheriff blows on his drink a bit.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Ali cringes at all the sex happening around him. He glances behind --

Slim -- kneeling on a goat skin -- goes to town on himself with one hand, pistol in the other.

ALI

Ughh... what?

Dorothy's head is tilted back so she can stare at Don as Burly fucks her.

Don keeps his eyes fixated on the sky above while lightly shaking his head.

Ritual Man, naked, walks around from behind them and sets his cup on the grass patch. Ritual Man returns behind them, where he and Ritual Woman get dressed.

Ali steals a curious glance at the cup --

Jackson breathes heavily, he thrusts faster and faster then quickly backs off Alexis, grabs his cup, and hunches over it while MOANING --

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - NIGHT

Sheriff sips his steaming beverage.

Glances down at his wristwatch -- hour and minute hands lightly glow in the dark -- 10:10.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Jackson, Alexis, Herman, and Kim -- all clothed -- meditate along the fire.

Burly and Alvarez set their cups down on the grass patch, making a total of six. As they and their partners get situated back around the perimeter, Cliff pours a few ounces of water into his empty, lead cup.

He picks up one of the six cups. Using the spoon, Cliff scrapes out the cup's contents into his lead cup of water.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Sheriff unrolls a sleeping bag. Lays it out next to Don's.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Goat skins -- some now lightly stained with blood -- remain scattered across the clearing.

Meditators meditate along the fire. Burly and Slim stay alert with guns in-hand.

Cliff scrapes the last of the six cups clean and stirs it into his lead cup -- Don and Ali watch.

Cliff holds the cup up... then takes a swig.

Ali grimaces.

Cliff hands the cup out for Don --

CLIFF

Energy.

Don takes it.

Burly uses the pistol to motion upward.

Don lifts the cup slowly...

Edge of the cup to his lips -- he tilts it back.

He swallows hard. Lightly GAGS.

Don brings his free hand to his mouth. He looks at the ground trying to keep it down.

He lifts his head back up. Hands the cup out to Cliff --

Cliff shifts his eyes to Ali.

ALI

No, No...

Burly stands up --

Ali takes the cup from Don. Holds it up to his mouth, briefly tilts it back. Mouth stays closed.

Ali takes the cup down -- thick liquid shines from his lips. He swallows, though clearly nothing ever entered his mouth.

He wipes the liquid from his lips then reaches past Don to hold the cup in front of Cliff.

Cliff holds a stare with Ali... then nods back to the cup.

ALI (CONT'D)
Fuck you, man.

Burly walks toward Ali --

ALI (CONT'D)
Fuck you. You crazy, sick fucks.

Burly raises the gun.

Ali pinches his nose and takes a solid swig -- he shakes his head back and forth with his tongue out.

ALI (CONT'D)
Uugghhhhh...

Ali hands the cup to Cliff, who sets it down.

Burly returns to his spot.

Cliff picks up the circular wire as does Don and Ali. The wire is rigid, more like a really thin pipe. They bring their elbows onto their knees -- with their palms outstretched, the large ring rests on their hands.

Cliff closes his eyes.

Don and Ali nod to each other before doing the same.

CLIFF
(slow and vibrating)
OM... SHAM... SHANICARAYA NAMAH.

Everyone joins in -- Don, Ali, and all the perimeter Meditators --

EVERYONE
OM... SHAM... SHANICARAYA NAMAH.
OM... SHAM... SHANICARAYA NAMAH.
OM... SHAM... SHANICARAYA NAMAH.

Everyone goes silent. They mouth the mantra -- "OM... SHAM... SHANICARAYA NAMAH. OM... SHAM... SHANICARAYA NAMAH."

Aloud again --

EVERYONE (CONT'D)
OM... SHAM... SHANICARAYA NAMAH.

SILENCE. Lips pursed together in group meditation.

5 seconds...

Everyone is completely still.

10 seconds...

Push in close on Don.

15 seconds...

Closer on Don, almost to his eyes --

BLACK SCREEN

-- Fire CRACKLES...

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Sheriff rustles, takes his arms out of his mummy sleeping bag. Wristwatch shows -- 10:52.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Everyone, including Burly and Slim, meditates. The ring balances between Ali, Don, and Cliff.

LATER

Don, eyes closed, removes one hand from the wire. He slowly reaches his hand towards Ali. We push in on Don as he does --

FLASHING IMAGE -- Abby looks back at us from the Red Mountain Trail. She shakes her head with a curious smile.

BACK TO:

Don stops... brings his second hand back to the wire.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Sheriff is sound asleep. His watch shows -- 11:10.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

A low, vibrating HUM fills the air. None of the meditators lose focus -- eyes stay shut, bodies stay still.

5 seconds...

10 seconds...

An ORB of light -- marble-sized -- floats in the center of the lead ring held by Ali, Cliff, and Don.

The orb pulsates like a beating heart. With each beat, it gets a tiny bit larger. Concurrently, the HUMMING grows louder, the VIBRATION more present.

The marble of light grows to a golf ball of light.

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - NIGHT

The tent's nylon gently vibrates.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

A tennis ball of light -- PULSE... PULSE...

A softball of light...

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Sheriff puts on a headlamp.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Still none of the Meditators have flinched even with a basketball of light floating in the center of them.

As the orb continues to grow, it illuminates the clearing.

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - NIGHT

Sheriff crawls out of Don's tent. Notices the faint HUM.

Tries to pop his ear with his finger.

He walks away from the tent.

Stops. Unzips his pants. Urinates.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Giant beach ball of light -- PULSES, getting close to touching the lead wire --

It stops pulsing. The HUM stops. The vibrating stops.
The orb of light floats in silence...

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - NIGHT

With the HUM suddenly gone, Sheriff stops peeing.
He locks in place like he's afraid to move.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

We push in on Don... light gleaming from his face --
The ball EXPLODES. The light expands all the way out to the
fire perimeter, but stops there as if trapped. Everyone is
hidden beneath a majestic white light.

EXT. HIGH FLAT, LILY LAKE TRAIL - NIGHT

To the north, incredible light illuminates the sky --
Sheriff, awestruck, watches...

EXT. CLEARINNG - NIGHT

In a flash, the shroud of light condenses into its center and
vanishes. A seismic wind ripples out from its epicenter above
the patch of grass in every direction, extinguishing the
perimeter fire in a HUSH.

Everyone is gone...

EXT. SPACE - (DON'S POV)

No sound. We float in a vibrant collection of swirling gas
and dust. We have no form, no manifestation -- just
perspective.

There's a thin, thread-like light (light-thread) attached to
us. It extends just a few feet out in front of us then ends.

We slowly push forward through the dust...

Reach the light-thread's end --

EXT. GIANT FOREST - DAY (DON'S POV)

Massive black trees with 30-foot diameters, surround us. Their sprawling branches and vibrantly-colored leaves create a canopy above.

Speckled, white grass and fallen leaves cover the ground. Our light-thread continues a few feet in front of us then ends.

There's a CLACK behind us --

We turn around to see THREE HUNTERS -- human in shape, but their bodies and features are completely covered in large leaves fastened to their bodies by vines. Each of them hold a long, curved spear.

They look toward us with curious posture...

Hunter #1 hits Hunter #2's spear with his own -- CLACK.

The Hunters resume their trek into the forest, away from us.

We focus back on the light-thread. Move to its end --

INT. GLASS ROOM (DON'S POV)

We're in a transparent, glass room. As far as we can see above, below, and around us are other glass rooms. Slight amount of light-emitting fog in the air.

Glass shelves float throughout, displaying objects that look like dinner plates covered in strange symbols.

We move to the end of the light-thread --

EXT. PINK OCEAN - DAY (DON'S POV)

We float above the calm, pink water in the orange, sunless sky. Dozens of rafts float on the ocean's surface.

But we quickly follow the light-thread. Getting the hang of this, we move faster --

SERIES OF SHOTS -- FOLLOWING THE LIGHT-THREAD (DON'S POV)

-- INT. CRYSTAL CAVE -- Gems lining the walls and floor of the tight cave shimmer from our light-thread --

-- INT. METAL PLATFORM -- Surrounded by huge gears and mechanical rods firing up and down. Like we're passing through a giant engine --

-- EXT. FIELD - NIGHT -- Hundreds of SPINDLY BEINGS sleep on the ground. The night's sky is streaked with purples and greens and huge jellyfish-like blobs. FASTER --

-- EXT. SKY BRIDGE - DAY -- We barely see that we're on a narrow bridge floating in the sky connected to a huge, rectangular structure --

EXT. LIGHT TUNNEL

We're pushing forward so fast that the dimensions we're passing through just blend into a tunnel surrounding us. Instead of a segment of light-thread in front us, the light-thread shoots forward connected and seemingly without end.

We follow the light-thread until we're hit with a huge flash of light --

EXT. RED MOUNTAIN TRAIL / LOOKOUT - DAY (POV)

Abby stops hiking. She looks over at us...

Our light-thread ends at Abby's backpack, which slightly glows from the inside.

Abby keeps looking over at us like she's listening.

She smiles.

A few tear drops fall from her flooded eyes. She stops to wipe them dry.

Abby resumes hiking. We push forward, staying even with her.

Our ascent levels out and we push up to edge alongside Abby.

We take in the view next to Abby -- layers of red rock spires ripple out under thick, dark clouds.

Distant thunder RUMBLES.

Abby sets her glowing pack down. She unzips and takes out the glowing object -- her phone.

She casually holds it as if unaware of the radiating light.

We slowly get pulled toward the phone -- our light-thread shortening -- we're getting reeled in.

She looks at us intently... like she's saying something.

We're moving closer...

She shakes her head with a curious smile. Holds the phone out to take a selfie, yanking us up into the light --

EXT. GARDEN, UFO WATCH TOWER - NIGHT

The brightness vanishes into the air behind Don.

CAMPER# 1 (O.S.)
(distant)
... there's another!

Flashlights and headlamps light up from the campground 50 yards away.

ALI (O.S.)
(forced whisper)
Don! Don! Come on!

Don turns around to see Ali crouching 15 yards away.

Don rushes to Ali.

ALI (CONT'D)
Where are we?

Don looks around, getting his bearings...

Campers group up in the distance -- their flashlight beams huddled together. They move forward to investigate.

The starlight allows Don to see the faint outline of the UFO watchtower. He realizes...

DON
Let's get out of here.

Don and Ali stay low, scampering towards the highway.

INT. MEETING ROOM, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Ali sits across from Sheriff. MUSCULAR OFFICER, 40, hands Ali a can of soda.

ALI
Was kind of hoping for one of those
glass bottle colas. Pretty sure
they'd have one at the gas station.

Muscular glances to Sheriff. Sheriff nods him on.

Muscular rolls his eyes.

INT. MEETING ROOM, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Don -- shirt buttoned up -- sits across from Sheriff.
Muscular stands.

MUSCULAR
Want anythin' to drink?

DON
No, thanks.

INTERCUT BETWEEN ALI AND DON

SHERIFF
Take me through the day of.

DON
Left the shelter at gun point.
Cliff and the two guys, don't know
their names, took us up some trail.

Muscular pops the cap off a glass bottled of cola, sets it on
the table in front of Ali.

ALI
I see this ring of fire with at
least ten people in that bitch.

Ali takes a swig.

DON
They start taking their clothes
off.

ALI
Next thing you know, it turns into
a sex-fest. This one dude going
solo --
(hand motions)
just gettin' it.

Sheriff looks confused.

Don nods in confirmation --

DON
Yeah...

ALI
Peeps are all in the zone so I'm
thinkin' it's time to make our
move. I give a heads up to Don, and
I bolt.

(MORE)

ALI (CONT'D)

This one dude tries coming at me --
Boom! Kicked him in the forehead.

DON

We ran. Eventually we could see
lights from Crestone, and we headed
in that direction.

INT. MEETING ROOM, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Don sitting across from Muscular and Sheriff. Sheriff takes a
few laminated papers from a stack next to him.

SHERIFF

Past week, we've been up to the
clearing, found the shelter... we
came across a few things. This mean
anything to you?

Sheriff hands over a laminated sheet --

INSERT -- "JANUARY 1959" at the top. The rest is a large
spreadsheet (Ephemeris). Days of the month down the Y-axis
and astrological symbols across the X-axis. Measurements
populate all the intersecting boxes. One measurement out of
the hundreds is highlighted -- "2°48" -- at the intersection
of January 31 and Saturn's Sickle.

BACK TO:

DON

That's my birthday.

Sheriff hands Don two similar spreadsheets -- One titled
"DECEMBER 1988" the other titled "DECEMBER 1929".

SHERIFF

Ali Zaman's birthday highlighted.
Cliff Loxton's birthday. And then --

Sheriff hands one more over -- "SEPTEMBER 2018".

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

The night at the clearing. All of
'em have that same measurement
there, two degrees forty-eight. Can
you make any sense of that?

Don glances down at the Saturn's Sickle symbol.

DON

No.

MUSCULAR

This birthday nonsense isn't a coincidence. But, how would they have known to target you?

FLASHING IMAGE -- In Dorothy's office, Dorothy looks over Don's driver's license. She looks back at Don with his gold chain and white tank top showing under his flannel and vest.

BACK TO:

DON

I don't know.

Don tosses the papers back.

SHERIFF

All right... you happen to have any idea where these twelve could be now?

DON

No.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE, LOBBY - DAY

Sheriff walking Don out. They stop at the doors.

SHERIFF

I was up there that night. Over on Lily lookin' for ya.

DON

Is that right?

SHERIFF

I saw somethin' up there. Kind of thing those people touched by the Sangres talk about it. And by the looks of it, should've been near the clearing you was in.

DON

Yeah? You feel special now?

SHERIFF.

I do... you take care now.

EXT. PARKING LOT, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Don heads toward his car where Ali is waiting. The Caddy's backseat is packed full of boxes.

ALI
How'd it go?

DON
Fine. You been all right?

ALI
Gone through five or six things of
mouthwash, but I'm good.

DON
They press you at all?

ALI
Nah, they know not to step. Still
though, going through it in
there... like insane as this entire
thing is... what I don't get is how
we ended up back here and they
didn't.

DON
You got some time?

I/E. CAR, COUNTRY HIGHWAY, UFO WATCHTOWER - DAY

With cars filling the parking lot, Don parks behind a line of
cars on the side of the highway. An old Jeep pulls behind.

EXT. UFO WATCHTOWER - DAY

Don and Ali walk through a CROWD. It's like a party. PEOPLE
cooking on portable grills, throwing frisbees, at tables
selling UFO merchandise.

Don and Ali make their way into the concrete hut --

INT. UFO WATCHTOWER - CONTINUOUS

Dark blinds cover all the windows. A video is projected on
one of the walls --

ON THE WALL

Shaky footage from a cell phone... darkness with a low HUM.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
It was over there! Did you see it?

There's a huge flash of light thirty yards ahead.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
There's another!

Everything goes dark again. The footage then rewinds and the flash of light is zoomed in on and played in slow-mo frame by frame, revealing a dark humanoid shape in the light.

The footage then starts over at the beginning and continues to play in the background on a loop.

BACK TO:

ALI
You might have the world's most
famous shadow.

EXT. GARDEN, UFO WATCH TOWER - DAY

Crowded with visitors moving around the garden of rocks and personal belongings. On the viewing deck above, Kathy gives an interview to three INTERNET REPORTERS. She loves it.

Don leads Ali to a cluster of belongings -- clearly visible among them are Abby's cracked phone and one of Ali's bracelets.

Ali bends down... looks at the bracelet.

ALI
And you put this here?

Don nods.

Ali picks up the bracelet. He spins it until coming across a piece of navy rock --

ALI (CONT'D)
This one --

FLASHBACK -- Ali's TRIP (POV) -- BASEMENT WORKSHOP

Shelves filled with rocks and minerals surround us.

We around turn to see Jahan holding a huge, navy rock shrouded in light. It has a light thread leading back to us.

He looks at us intently then smiles in amazement...

Jahan sets the rock down on the table. Leaves the workshop.

We hear the RUMBLE of feet going up old stairs.

We turn again to look at the hundreds of specimens, big and small, organized on the higher shelves. We're getting pulled backward...

RUMBLING of feet coming down the stairs.

The shelves get further away as we're pulled...

Second RUMBLING -- much lighter -- down the stairs.

We turn around and rush into the light of the navy rock --

BACK TO:

EXT. GARDEN, UFO WATCH TOWER - DAY

A few Visitors walk up behind Ali and Don. Ali drops the bracelet back on the pile.

EXT. JEEP, SIDE OF COUNTRY HIGHWAY, UFO WATCH TOWER - DUSK

Don and Ali sit on the tailgate of Ali's old Jeep -- the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the east, sun setting behind the San Juan mountains to the west.

ALI

... like I knew exactly where I wanted to go and how to get there. And then I saw him, and we had this... unloading of love for each other. Any of this making sense?

DON

All of it.

Goes quiet for a few seconds as a car WHOOSHES by...

ALI

The Sheriff and my mom both told me how you kept searching for me --

DON

It's nothing, I --

ALI

It's not. And had you not put that bracelet there, I'd still be floating around... wherever the hell we were.

Don stands up --

DON
Where you off to next?

ALI
Going back home with my mom for a
while.

DON
That's good.

ALI
You?

Don pulls a folded up piece of paper out of his pocket --

DON
Not sure. Maybe you can help me
out.

Ali looks over the list of locations that was pinned to the
world map. "CRESTONE, COLORADO" now has a check mark --

ALI
You've got good taste... Go to
Medford. Hit up Crater Lake. And
call me when you get up there. I
got some friends that can show you
around.

Don folds the paper back up. Walks in the direction of his
car --

DON
Yeah? Like the friends you made
here?

Ali LAUGHS. Follows Don back to the Caddy.

Don opens his door then turns around --

DON (CONT'D)
All right, well...

Don puts his hand out for a shake.

Ali shakes and goes in for a bro-hug.

ALI
(hugging)
Seriously, call me when you get up
there.

DON

I will.

Ali walks back to his jeep... stops before getting in --

ALI

We're going to see each other
again.

DON

I know. Maybe twenty-nine years or
so?

ALI

Nah, we'll make it sooner than
that.

Don gets in the Caddy. Ali gets in his jeep.

Both pull out onto the country highway -- Caddy heading
north, Jeep heading south...

Leaving us a view of the majestic Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

FADE OUT.

THE END