

METEOR CRATER

Screenplay by

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"You are all a lost generation."

- Gertrude Stein, 1922

"I feel stupid and contagious."

- Kurt Cobain, 1992

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLACK SCREEN.

A low, deafening RUMBLING.

grows LOUDER.

and LOUDER.

FADE IN:

Slowly, some faint RED AND BLUE CELESTIAL CLOUDS ooze into view. Giant amoebas in a petri dish. The cosmic storm is like a science project gone awry.

Suddenly, bright pin points of LIGHT pierce through pools of the fluffy clouds.

Then, the billowing CLOUDS recede, shrinking back into the black void.

A LARGE BLUE CLOUD comes into view and fills the void. Like gerbils on a treadmill, the pools of gases race around each other.

LIGHT RAYS spark, burn bright and fizzle away. A giant sparkler in the middle of the universe.

A solid plane of GREEN LIGHT shoots forth, with dark blue and silver waves ebbing and flowing.

Suddenly, everything stops. No motion. Stillness.

A moment passes.

CUT TO:

EXPLOSION

This is it kids, the cosmic Big Bang!

Billions of scattered RED FIREBALLS burst forth, scattering cosmic material into the infinite void.

Time doesn't exist. Colorful galaxies and planets mushroom, expand, and disappear within seconds.

Swirls and planes of FRUIT COLORED GALAXIES are mixed inside a massive cosmic blender. White stars EXPLODE into supernova and fade away instantaneously. Billions of years expanding and collapsing in just a few seconds...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

ON EARTH

A soupy mix of blue oceans and dove white clouds amidst patches of brown and gray islands.

The SUN and MOON glow in background as if watchful eyes on an infant world.

Distant FUZZY RADIO STATIC squeaks alive. Pilot chatter. Then, gradually, human voices FADE IN. First, just a couple, then a cacophony of mumbling voices blend into one LOUD ROAR.

PAN AWAY

past the SUN and MOON into black void filled with pinpoints of STARLIGHT...haunting memories that refuse to die.

DISSOLVE INTO:

Thousands of BRIGHT WHITE DOTS flowing toward us.

PULL OUT to reveal a screensaver on a computer screen.

CUT TO:

INT.OFFICE -- DAY

A delicate HAND with nails drenched in shiny black nail polish, reaches into view and touches the screen.

VOICE (O.S.)

Daria? Hello, are you awake?

ANGLE ON

DARIA, 29, long brown hair, asleep with her head down on the office desk. Pamphlets of exotic islands speckle the synthetic cubicle walls. Her hand rests on the computer screen.

A hefty fat man, MR. DILLER, hovers over Daria.

PULL OUT

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

to reveal hundreds of other assistants in a vast, 20th century white-collar sweatshop. The cubicles are veal-fattening pens, and arranged in a rat maze to keep the occupants confused as to where their cheese is located.

MR. DILLER
(yelling)
Daria!

Daria snaps awake. Eyes drooping. Squints her eyebrows in the intense greenish glow of the good ol' artificial fluorescent light.

ANGLE ON DARIA

26, a frumpy but pretty girl. Think Liv Tyler.

DARIA
(drowsy)
Uh, what? (beat) What time is it?

Finally focusing, she looks up.

DARIA (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Oh, I'm so sorry Mr. Diller. I just didn't get much sleep last...

Shakes head in disgust.

MR. DILLER
Here you go.

Dumps a pile of paper on her desk. THUD. A load of shit.

DARIA
(looking at the pile)
What am I...

MR. DILLER
(interrupting)
You're supposed to make three copies, fax a copy of each to every respective client. Then file them away.

In awe, Daria picks up copy, reads fine print.

DARIA
(bewildered)
October 1972?

MR. DILLER
Listen, darlin'. That's my business.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DARIA
 (eyes widen in shock)
 Well, I guess I could have it done by
 next week...

MR. DILLER
 Daria, do you like working here?

DARIA
 (sarcastically)
 Yeah, um, of course.

MR. DILLER
 (interrupting)
 Then let's remember why you're here,
 shall we? To serve me. I don't want to
 come in next Monday morning and not see
 that paperwork complete. Time is money.
 Don't waste my time.
 (turning to leave)
 Good day, Daria.

Daria looks up. He's gone. She follows orders but her
 sensitive soul is easily hurt.

Daria lays her head down on the desk. Closes her eyes, looks
 up at postcard...a sandy beach surrounded by blue water...and
 wishes she could escape this Orwellian nightmare.

A few cubes down the hall, MEGAN, skips along.

MEGAN
 (excitedly)
 Daria, oh, Daria! Wake up! Did you
 remember to set me up with that cute guy?

Daria stares blankly at Megan.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 (continued)
 Oh, no worries. I trust you.
 (beat) So like what's going on with old
 Mr. Frigid Penis, huh?

Daria puts out her hand.

DARIA
 I'm rotting. (beat) How old am I?

MEGAN
 Hmm? I don't know. Aren't you like
 twenty-six? No, twenty-eight, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DARIA
I'm twenty nine, almost thirty. I hate my job. I'm broke. No prospects on the marriage front. (dropping her head) Where did I go wrong?

Megan, innocently, picks her fingernails.

MEGAN
(ignoring her)
Life's tough all over, babe.

DARIA
(mumbling)
Well, that's consolation.

MEGAN
(interrupting)
Look do you wanna go out tonight?

DARIA
(angrily)
Go out? Why? I never meet anyone.

MEGAN
Well, I do...and just have.

DARIA
(vindictively)
You think you have. Two months, you'll be back over talking about some new guy...I can't even keep track of em'.
(beat)
You go through guys like lipstick.

MEGAN
Hey, it's how the game is played.

Phone RINGS again. Daria watches it ring a couple of times. Reaches over, presses the blinking RED LIGHT.

DARIA
(solemnly)
Mr. Diller's office. (beat) No, he's out at the moment. Would you like to leave a message? Okay, I'll tell him you called.

Another RING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DARIA (CONT'D)
(continued)
Mr. Diller's office. Can you hold?
(beat) Oh, mom! I'm sorry.

Daria drops her head. This is going to be a long one.

DARIA (CONT'D)
(continued)
Work is fine, mom. Yeah. (shaking her
head) Uh, yeah, we're still seeing each
other.

Bright specs of LIGHT on the screen flow toward Daria hypnotically catching her attention.

DARIA (CONT'D)
(eyes widen in surprise)
I've got something to tell you, mom.
(beat) I'm not seeing him anymore.

Cringing in fear, Daria beats her head on desk.

DARIA (CONT'D)
(continued)
Hear me out! (beat) What? Of course we
had good sex!

A fellow CUBE INMATE overhears, shooting Daria a look.

Daria sneers back.

DARIA (CONT'D)
(continued)
Why? He left me. (beat) What? What
kind of question is that, mom? (beat) I
gotta go. Goodbye!

Without hesitation, Daria starts stuffing her purse.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. DILLER'S OFFICE -- DAY

A large wooden door cracks open. A bland utilitarian office. An Ansel Adams print hangs on the bare wall. Probably from an office supply catalogue.

Daria enters with a pile of papers, walks over to desk and plops them down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Daria walks over to the expansive office window, gazing out at the view...a massive, sprawling concrete city. An awesome testament to human overpopulation.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

A row of dying, naked TREES in a small forest covered in snow, awaiting the first breath of spring.

Overcast skies cast a depressing white light on bare limbs.

A gentle sprinkle of WHITE SNOW drifts downward.

SUPERIMPOSE: "JANUARY 1992"

DISSOLVE INTO:

INT. BEDROOM -- DAY

PULL BACK through a small window pane into a makeshift bedroom and we discover a converted ATTIC BEDROOM.

A real TRASH DUMP. Empty cans, dirty clothes, vinyl records, and video tapes among other things litter the room. A record player sits on top of a makeshift stool.

Movie and rock group posters plaster the slanted walls.

PAN OVER

dozens of BOOKS and MAGAZINES blanketing the floor: Learn How To Fly, Generation X, A Confederacy of Dunces, Spin, Abby Hoffman: Steal This Movie.

PAN ACROSS TO

TELEVISION SCREEN

A MENTOS COMMERCIAL comes to end. A plastic FEMALE MTV host appears.

MTV HOST

(overly excited)

Welcome back, dudes! Coming up we've got new videos from Bon Jovi, Trixter, and Cinderella. (beat) But first, we've got something new, a band from Seattle...Nirvana. They're a bit weird but seem to be getting popular. So check it out, dudes!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NIRVANA'S "Smells Like Teen Spirit" video fades in on the television.

The music is droned out by EXPLODING ELECTRONIC SOUNDS.

PAN OVER TO

TELEVISION SCREEN

filled with little army men getting blown to bits.

ANGLE ON MARK

19, disheveled, mopy hair, flannel shirt. A cigarette burns in an ashtray next to cheese doodles. In this little insulated room, he's in his own world.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING

Inside a drab little farm kitchen, Mark's MOTHER slaves diligently over a greasy stove, carefully placing strips of greasy bacon on a paper towel.

Mark enters, peers over his mother's shoulder and sits at the table.

Mom brings over sizzlin' SKILLET. Pulls out the bacon which plops on his plate. The low fat craze hasn't hit this family.

MOM

Just how you like it.

FADE TO BLACK:

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE -- DAY

A small country HOUSE in the middle of nowhere. An old Chevrolet STATION WAGON rattles away in the gravel driveway. Snow covers everything. Exhaust fumes pour from the tail pipe. A depressing Midwestern farm scene.

Mark pushes through a screen door. Carrying a cardboard box, he lumbers over to the station wagon.

Mom appears in the doorway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOM

You don't realize it now, but you're going to be glad ya' finally left this place one day.

MARK

You don't have to tell me that. (beat)
But this trip is going to suck. Why couldn't I just fly?

MOM

Mark, you just started flying lessons...

MARK

(interrupting)
On a real plane, mom.

MOM

Aren't you going to give me a hug?

Mark reluctantly gives her a hug.

MARK

I've gotta go.

MOM

Now stay out of trouble. California is full of drug addicts and freaks.

She cracks a smile.

Mark steps through five feet of snow to get to the door.

The car heads slowly down the driveway. Mom sits awkwardly on her porch. A look of foreboding overcomes her as she watches Mark disappear into the falling snow.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR -- DAY

The simple house recedes into distance. Mark looks into his rear view mirror and sees mother waving good-bye.

He reaches to touch her image in mirror.

FADE INTO:

INT. CAR -- DAYS LATER -- DAY

Times Square after New Years. The front seat is littered with half-eaten donuts, empty hot dog wrappers, and plastic 7-11 cups.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mark moves in his seat. A mass of trash moves with him.

A garbled radio broadcast FADES IN.

DJ (O.S.)
 (manic, excited)
 This is DJ Daryl coming right at you from
 glorious St. Louis, Missouri. You're
 listening to ZRock 101FM. As promised,
 here's the new one from Cinderella!
 Yeah, dude!

ON MARK

as glam rock riffs of Cinderella FADE IN.

MARK
 (mumbling)
 Life is too short for this shit.

He fumbles with tapes. Throws in cassette.

"Don't Go Back to Rockville" by REM blares over speakers.

SOUND OVER

FADE INTO:

EXT. CAR -- DAY

A cloud of EXHAUST FUMES rolls by the St. Louis Archway.

The station wagon lost somewhere in the middle.

FADE INTO:

INT. DARIA'S KITCHEN -- DAY

A complete mess.

Rotting food, spoiled milk, and other debris is scattered over the counter. There is something wrong here. Piles of unpaid bills are stacked on the table.

Daria sits solemnly eating dry CORN FLAKES. An open diary, scribbled in pen, lays next to the bowl. A TORN PHOTO of a guy lays scattered in shreds.

She flips through VOGUE magazine.

A CAT begs for attention. Daria doesn't notice. Lost in thought, she stares into bowl.

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CONTINUED:

Takes a nibble. Got milk? No. Pops a can of PEPSI and pours it into the cereal.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM

Daria drags herself inside. Lights incense stick. Places it next to the bed.

DARIA IN MIRROR

stares at body and begins removing clothing. Fully naked, she stares at her form.

ON NIGHTSTAND

as some Dr. Kevorkian books are scattered around vials of pills.

ON PHONE

she reaches over and dials. RINGING.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S)

Hello?

DARIA

Hey, mom, it's me. I'm going to come and visit for a few weeks. (beat) I need to get away for awhile.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

You're welcome anytime, dear.

DARIA

I just need some distraction. Hey, maybe I'll hit it big...

Daria turns and looks over at a vial of pills.

ANGLE ON TELEVISION

A scene from THE BLOB. A giant METEOR collides with Earth. People run around SCREAMING. The large mass grows closer to the planet, casting a dark SHADOW.

ON DARIA

watching hypnotically. Shadows from television FLICKER.

Entranced, she munches on popcorn, potato chips and candy

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

bars among other junk food. The cat crawls across her lap.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM -- HOURS LATER

Daria pulls up the toilet seat. Gets down on knees, sticks hand down throat. YACKS up food. Very routine.

ANGLE IN MIRROR

Daria wipes her face with a rag. Looks at her nude body in the mirror. Turns from side-to-side.

In the background, the phone RINGS. Daria, lost in her own image, ignores it. Answering machine picks up.

DARIA'S VOICE (ON MACHINE)

I don't have time for you. But leave a message anyway. (BLEEP)

MR. DILLER (V.O.)

Uh, Daria. (beat) It's Mr. Diller. I'm sorry to have to do this, but I've gotta let you go. You're just not working out at ADCO.

Daria's jaw drops.

MR. DILLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You can come to work Monday to clean out your desk.

Daria runs into the living room. Picks up the answering machine. SLAMS it against the wall.

Plastic BITS shatter.

CUT TO:

KITCHEN

Daria scrambles. Pulls out a small knife.

CUT TO:

BATHROOM

Daria, distraught, stares at herself in mirror. Mascara runs like a river. Looks down at wrists. Stares into mirror.

Daria wipes away the condensation. Then, she smiles. Shakes her head. Daria turns and drops the knife into the trash can.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON A FLY

The BUZZING fly catches Daria's attention as it swirls around the room.

DISSOLVE INTO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY -- DAY

Lush green trees and blossoming daffodils surround white buildings peppered with red bricks.

A large circular OVAL separates the middle of campus.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR -- DAY

Mark's car rolls down main road. He slows down and gazes at the multitudes of buildings and students.

CUT TO:

INT. DORMITORY HALLWAY -- DAY

Old fifties-style. Dark brown FURNITURE. Mark enters through the main arched doorway, carrying a box, looks up to see...

INSANE ASYLUM

Hundreds of KIDS run around the halls like beheaded chickens.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORM ROOM

Mark, covered in sweat and grime, throws down the final box. Looks out window. Sees SUNLIGHT beginning to fade.

Notices a SPARROW on a tree limb harking to its muse.

FADE INTO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Dozens of STUDENTS, bored like zombies, sit motionless as a BEARDED PROFESSOR in a wheelchair spins onto podium.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ON MARK

Alone at a table. Doesn't pay attention.

CUT TO:

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING -- DAY

Mark sees a group of STUDENTS at their desks taking notes. A young, dashing PROFESSOR notices his entrance.

PROFESSOR
(to Mark)
Why don't you have a seat?

Mark reluctantly nods, sits in the back row.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
Where did I leave off? (beat) Oh, yes,
writing for the school paper can be a
rewarding and deeply satisfying
experience.

Everyone chuckles. Mark frowns. Raises hand.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
Yes, in the back?

MARK
What if we want to write about issues
that are controversial? (beat) Who
censors the editor?

PROFESSOR
Uh, this paper is here for the entire
student body.

Mark looks on skeptically.

CUT TO:

EXT. DORMITORY -- DAY

A GREENPEACE TENT is surrounded by dozens of granola hippie STUDENTS.

Sinister looking posters of President George Bush Sr. are plastered along the wall, and each has a big red X spray painted over his face.

MURRAY, long hair, ski cap, yells through MEGAPHONE.

Other MEMBERS hand out flyers. These guys look militant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MURRAY

(in megaphone)

We need to take direct action! The planet is dying more every day! The system is not going to change fast enough from the inside! (beat) We must attack and bring media attention.

The students CHEER.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Overpopulation will bring society to its knees! But systems like the Catholic church refuse to pay attention, and instead let people in third world countries live in ignorance!

Mark appears in CROWD, seemingly interested in the madness.

MARK

Hey!

The crowd hushes, MURRAY stops in middle of speech.

MURRAY

Look, if you're another young Republican agitator...

MARK

(interrupting)

What kind of direct action? Do you really think speeches cause anything to change?

MURRAY

In a way you're right, my friend. We may lose some battles, but we'll win our war. We must try, try, try!

Crowd ROARS. This guy is good. Mark looks around at everyone caught up in moment.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Till we reconvene at eight in the student union, remember, love the Earth because the Earth loves you.

A pretty YOUNG GIRL in a flower dress jerks the megaphone away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HIPPIE GIRL

(like a drill instructor)

Okay, everyone. Listen! Tonight bring your friends. We're planning something big and we need your help.

ON MARK

as he admires the mass of people willingly joining the struggle. Students push on by, frantically rushing to grab pamphlets.

CAMPUS POLICE watching silently in background.

ON STUDENTS

as they envelope around Murray and Hippie Girl.

ON MURRAY

out of the corner of his eye watching Mark.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- NIGHT

A last crack of BURNING SUNLIGHT gleams in on dozens of nearly comatose students. Like a scene out of Dante's Inferno, except these suckers are chained to desks.

ON MARK

reading a USA Today newspaper at a desk. Front page article is titled: "Unemployed College Students Working In Fast Food."

A GIRL sits down next to Mark. Mark feigns a smile. She drops her books.

THUD.

GIRL

(whispering)

Sorry.

Girl turns. Chews a pencil.

GIRL (CONT'D)

Don't I know you from somewhere?

MARK

Doubt it. Just started this semester.
(beat) Mark.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Extends his hand.

GIRL

Angela.

Shake hands.

ANGELA

(excitedly)

Now I know! You're that guy from the newspaper class.

Mark rolls eyes.

MARK

(trying to blow her off)

Look, I was just trying to cause trouble.

ANGELA

Wow! You're deep.

BEEP. She looks down at her Mickey Mouse watch.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Shit. I've got a meeting. (beat) Wait a second! You might like something like this! Wanna come?

MARK

I've really got to study...

Angela stands up. Yes, this is a pretty woman.

MARK (CONT'D)

Wait, I'll go. Maybe we can go out for a beer afterwards.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Monkeys in a zoo. The ROAR of students arguing in a small classroom. Everyone fits a counterculture stereotype: beatniks, slackers, granolas.

Three students in a corner arguing.

STUDENT 1

Look, man, the government is fucked up! Our generation is screwed! Reagan and Bush fucked it all up, man! (beat) Our economy is over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STUDENT 2

Right on, brother! We'll be feeling the after shock of their fucked up economic agenda for decades! Fuck Reagan! Fuck George Bush! Fuck the Republicans! They don't give a shit about the working class! Fuck em'!

STUDENT 3

I've given up hope of our economy ever recovering. (beat) Trickle down economics my ass...we're paying for it. (beat) If only I was born in the fifties, man, my life would have been set.

STUDENT 1

So, let's fuck it up!

STUDENT 3

Yeah, man! Show em' how pissed off we really are!

ON MARK AND ANGELA

entering the room. Mark looks worried.

MARK

What did you say this was again?

ANGELA

It's Greenpeace, or Earth First. (beat) Hell, I don't know.

A DARK FIGURE enters the room. Mark's jaw drops.

MARK

(whispering)
I gotta go...

The DARK FIGURE turns around. It's Murray.

MURRAY

Well, I see some new members in here tonight.

Mark looks around. Everyone is staring.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Not to worry. We're all friends.

DISSOLVE INTO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- LATER IN MEETING

MURRAY

(in front of the room)

So in order for change to occur within a system, there has to be an equal amount of resistance that is overcome. Basic physics, man! Einstein!

FAT ALBERT, black, overweight, sweat beading from his large forehead, stands up.

FAT ALBERT

Yeah! Resistance! Fight the power!

MURRAY

(pointing at Fat Albert)

That is the kind of attitude we need.
(beat) So few people are willing to sacrifice.

TED, beard, glasses, runs up in front of room.

TED

Allright, everyone. Let's take off the gloves.

Room goes silent. Mark takes keen interest.

TED (CONT'D)

(reading from a pamphlet)

We are really talking about is technology and science. The Industrial Revolution has made modern life devoid of natural pleasure. We are faced with the threat of losing our humanity.

Many students look lost.

TED (CONT'D)

(continued)

We've simply gotten out of touch with nature. Our political, social and economic systems have failed!

MARK

(whispering to Angela)

Is this one of those guys that sends mail bombs?

Angela shoots him an annoying look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STUDENT VOICE (O.S.)

What are you advocating? Are you a Marxist?

TED

The reason I joined this group was to cause real change. Rhetoric gets you nowhere. I'm advocating direct action against institutions that perpetuate the current system. (beat) And this college is one of them. (beat) There is no greater high than challenging the power structure as a nobody, giving it your all, and winning! It's time for change!

MURRAY

Revolution, my friends! (beat) Revolution is not something fixed in ideology, nor is it something fashioned to a particular decade. It's a perpetual process imbedded in the human spirit.

Everyone's attention is transfixed.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

(continued)

Ted is right. We must take action! Sabotage, protests, vandalism. All forms of protest to bring attention to our cause.

STUDENT (O.S.)

What about harm to others?

TED

This is jihad, man! There are no innocents.

STUDENT 1 (O.S.)

So more tree spiking and monkey-wrenching?

MURRAY

No.

TED

We need attention on a larger scale.

MURRAY

(proudly)

Yes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MURRAY (cont'd)

(beat) We're going to overtake the science building on campus, paint it and stage a protest.

STUDENT 1 (O.S.)

What! We'll all get expelled.

STUDENT 2 (O.S.)

Get thrown in jail.

MURRAY

Who cares! Besides, with the publicity, the administration wouldn't dare!

TED

(yelling)

Fuck em'. Who cares anyway? Our system is already collapsed...this is about freedom, the first Amendment. We're going to be the generation that's going to take back our rights and democracy from the corporations. (beat) I truly believe we can start a revolution across the country. There's a reason why we're all here today. It's not an accident. Fate is the card that was handed to us today. We can either stand up and follow our path or lose faith and walk away. (beat) Who's with me? Stand together. Rock together...

Mark stands up.

MARK

When?

MURRAY

(caught off guard)
I'm sorry.

MARK

When do we take over the building?

TED

(mumbling)
Well, how about Sunday night?

MURRAY

That might be a little too soon. I was...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARK
(interrupting)
Thought so. Angela, I'm sorry, I can't
stand to listen to empty bullshit.

TED
(to Mark)
Hey, man, I'm serious. What's your name?

MARK
Mark.

TED
Mark, we're on. (beat) Sunday night.

FADE INTO:

INT. DORM ROOM -- NIGHT

A shaft of blue MOONLIGHT beams through the cracked paneled window, illuminating Mark laying in bed staring up through the skylight.

ANGLE ON SKYLIGHT

STARS and a crescent shaped MOON look surreal against the black void. A stream of silver LIGHT shoots by leaving glistening remnants of a shooting star.

BUZZING of a small plane comes and goes, leaving only the CLICKING of the crickets and CHIRPING birds.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS BUILDING ROOF

Mark on top gazing at the campus. Sun is beginning to set, casting a ORANGE GLOW over campus.

ON MARK

with determination in his eyes. A fire has been lit.

MARK (V.O.)
I've always wanted to make a stand for
something in my life.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORM ROOM -- NIGHT

Mark writing feverishly in notebook.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK (V.O.)

(continued)

This Sunday we're going to take over the Hawking building. Let off some smoke, chain ourselves to the damn thing. We'll be on the six o'clock news all across the country.

CUT TO:

INT. GUNSTORE -- DAY

Militia headquarters. Mark and Ted walk through the iron front door.

An old bell CLANGS. Hundreds of assault rifles rack the walls.

ANGLE ON SHOPKEEPER

as he shows a machine gun to customer.

SHOPKEEPER

This can be modified, not legally of course, and I would never recommend it. (beat, quietly) All you have to do is file the pin down.

CUSTOMER

(looking at the gun)
Hell, it just seems wimpy! Not enough weight. I want some heavy duty metal. (beat) Not this cheapo Chinese shit!

The Shopkeeper, noticing Mark and Ted, nods.

SHOPKEEPER

Well, why don't you look at it a little closer. I need to help these fellas' out.

ON MARK AND TED

MARK

We need a gun.

SHOPKEEPER

Okay? Well, what are you looking to do?

TED

(looking at Mark)
Uh, protection, man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK

(back at Shopkeeper)
No, look, we just need a blank gun.
We're with the track and field team.

SHOPKEEPER

(suspiciously)
Let me see.

Shopkeeper reaches underneath. Pulls out a REVOLVER.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)

(hands the gun to Mark)
Don't really stock many blank guns.

TED

Do we need a license for this?

SHOPKEEPER

Oh, no. It's nothing more than a cap
gun.

Mark toys with the gun.

TED

Hey, remember that scene in the
Terminator where...

SHOPKEEPER

(interrupting)
Look, are you boys here to play or what?

MARK AND TED

(in unison)
We'll take it.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES -- DAY

Dying remnants of an industrial past...rusting cranes and
railroad tracks, empty warehouses surrounded by barbed wire,
and liquor billboards dot the urban decay.

In the shadow of these modern skyscrapers devoted to white-
collar commerce, these historic relics are a haunting
reminder of things to come.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S CAR

The battered station wagon RUMBLES down the crowded highway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Thousands of cars congest the sprawling crisscross of ramps and freeway connections.

CUT TO:

EXT. HAWKING BUILDING -- NIGHT

Mark and Ted sit on a bench. Each pull out a cigarette.

MARK
(looking around)
Well, it looks like it's just us.

TED
Right on, man.

MARK
(looking at watch)
It's late.

TED
We'll do it ourselves.

MARK
Where is everyone? It's nine o'clock.

TED
History is made in times like these, my friend.

Murray and other STUDENTS appear in camouflage fatigues.

MURRAY
(shouting)
Nine o'clock. (beat) Sorry we're late.
We had to pick up some tools.

TED
Alright, is everyone ready? Does everyone know the plan?

Everyone nods their head.

MURRAY[♂]
Let's get to work.

They all leave except Mark, who sits on bench waiting for his cig to finish.

ANGLE ON CIGARETTE

SEAMLESS CUT TO:

CIGARETTE

as a hand pulls it to mouth. Red lipstick.

PULL OUT

to reveal Daria.

CUT TO:

INT. DARIA'S CAR -- NIGHT

Barely illuminated by the dim YELLOW DASHLIGHT, Daria drives through crowded traffic.

Traffic comes to standstill.

ANGLE ON DARIA

Cars HONK louder.

SOUNDS erupt in a piercing tone.

Daria CLOSES HER EYES.

SEAMLESS CUT TO:

DARIA'S HULLICINATIONS

The Aurora Borealis in a Dionysian dream...red, blue and yellow gases float in the air like clouds.

Jagged red rocks appear in the background. Red dust covers the ground.

The sandy ground begins to shift. A dusty, naked HUMAN FORM wriggles itself free...long flowing black hair, pale skin.

Daria rises. Patches of dust cling to her body.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL

Daria on top of a METEOR. Large RED FLAMES chase the tail as it flies through the universe.

Reflected light from Earth gleams on Daria's face. She smiles and thrusts her arms in victory.

SEAMLESS CUT TO:

ANGLE ON DARIA

asleep at wheel. Back to reality.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A passing car blows HORN. Daria snaps awake. Swerves over to the side of the road.

CUT TO:

INT. DARIA'S CAR -- NIGHT

Panting, frightened, alone. Daria rummages through her PURSE, lights up a smoke. A few drops of rain pitter-patter on the windshield.

She sticks her hand out the window. Cups a few drops in her palm. Rubs her face. Off in the distance, giant electric WIND GENERATORS spin rapidly on a hillside.

Daria's eyes become transfixed on the constant spinning of the large blades.

Flashes of white LIGHTNING illuminate the vast, arid desert. Daria reaches into her purse. Pulls out a cassette tape recorder. Hits record...

DARIA

Mom. It's me Daria. I'm doing better.
 (beat) I've decided to make some changes
 in my life. I'm going to take charge.
 No more relying on others. I'm
 responsible for my own happiness. I
 think that's why I've been so miserable
 lately. I don't like being that way. I
 realized it's my own fault. I just want
 to let you know I love you. I appreciate
 all your support. (beat) Well, I gotta
 go.

Daria's face brightens. A change has overcome her. She looks ahead into the incoming car lights piercing through the sheets of rain. She smiles.

FADE INTO:

EXT. HAWKING BLDG. ROOF -- NIGHT

Animal house mayhem. Empty paint cans are scattered everywhere. Kids are running around like monkeys.

Mark and Ted hang a banner over the top of the building:
 EARTH & HUMANS FIRST--NO COMPROMISES!

TED

(admiring the banner)
 Simple. Gets the point across.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mark lights up cigarette.

Looks on proudly at the work.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL

The entire building looks like a tie-dye shirt painted in swirls of red, blue, yellow and green.

A few STUDENTS put finishing touches on the masterpiece. Jerry Garcia would be proud.

INT. HAWKING BLDG. -- NIGHT

Two STUDENTS wire elaborate strings and wires over the walls and doors. Cans of smoke GRENADES are taped to the ceilings.

Mark hops down the steps carrying ball of string. Murray is chaining the front door shut.

MARK

Don't lock it up yet, dude. (beat) I still need to run home.

MURRAY

For what!? We're here to stay. No one leaves.

MARK

Look, buddy. (beat) I'm not taking orders from anyone.

Murray pulls on a link of chain and it breaks loose.

MURRAY

(frustrated)
Fuck! Look what you made me do!

Mark lights up CIGARETTE. He stares at Murray. Dead cold.

MARK

Function, my man.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM ROOM

Mark opens DOOR and is careful not to wake roommate.

He looks down at clock: 6:00AM.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
(whispering)
Damn.

Mark reaches under his bed and pulls out a clump of towels. Underneath his desk, he pulls out a backpack.

GIRLS VOICE (O.S.)
(whispering)
Hey, c'mon.

Mark whips around and closes the door.

ANGLE IN HALLWAY

as Angela grabs Mark and gives him hug. Mark hugs her and they embrace.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS -- DAY

Mark and Angela skip down the sidewalk like kids in a candy store. Suddenly, faint SIRENS are heard.

Looking ahead, they see a campus POLICE CAR in front of the building.

CUT TO:

EXT. HAWKING BLDG. -- NIGHT

Two police officers, JAKE and BILL, have guns drawn.

JAKE
(screaming into megaphone)
Everyone come out with your hands up!
(beat) Now!

CUT TO:

INT. BUILDING

Ted, Murray and other students look out windows.

TED
Where in the hell did these guys come from?

MURRAY
(worried)
Come from? We were out screamin' on campus all day!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MURRAY (cont'd)

It doesn't take a genius to figure we're going to do something. (beat) Unfuckin' believable!

TED

Allright, everyone. This is not how I planned this, but we still need to go forward. (beat) Let's go!

Student scramble to pull the wires and strings. POP! POP!

Smoke grenades spew out dense smoke.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING

Red and yellow SMOKE engulfs building. Some students appear on roof YELLING into megaphones.

STUDENT 1

(screaming)

Earth First! Long live the planet!

Officer Bill reaches down for radio.

OFFICER BILL

(yelling)

Bring in the riot team! (beat) Yes, you heard right! We've got a full scale fuck up here.

ANGLE ON TED AND MURRAY

popping pins off smoke grenades. This place looks like a chimney.

TED

I don't see the media, man.

MURRAY

They'll be here.

TED

What happened to Mark? Where's Mark?
(beat) Fuck him!

CUT TO:

EXT. RICE HALL -- MORNING

Mark and Angela peering around edge of building.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They see the chaos right around the corner...more police cars, fire trucks, and riot teams move into place.

A news van arrives and the crew jumps out.

MARK

Shit! Shit! Fuck! Fuck!

ANGELA

Oh, my god! They're going to get killed!
Mark, you've gotta do something!

MARK

Angela, this is fuckin' nuts!

Mark reaches into his pack and pulls out clump of towels.

The blank GUN falls loose.

ANGELA

You've gotta a gun?

MARK

Hey, calm down. It's not real.

ANGELA

Well, I'm leaving..that's real.

MARK

(watching Angela leave)
Go on! It's times like these that
history is made!

Pulls out a cig. Nicotine rush.

CUT TO:

EXT. HAWKING BLDG.

Ted peers over the edge. News crew is taping the entire scene.

TED

Hey, everyone, it's time!

Everyone looks at one another.

ANGLE ON NEWS CREW

NEWSWOMAN

I'm here at Cal State University where a
student demonstration has just erupted.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEWSWOMAN (cont'd)

From what I can tell, the students are part of the radical environmental group, Earth First.

ANGLE THROUGH VIDEOCAMERA

A pair of underwear lands on her head.

NEWSWOMAN

(embarrassed)

And now it seems the students, um, have now removed their clothing as a form of protest.

PAN UP

dozens of shirts and pants flying over the building. Students get on top of the ledge and dance in their glory.

BACK TO MARK

Mark watches anxiously. Stuffs the gun in pants.

BACK TO POLICE

as more TROOPERS arrive armed with shields, gas masks and clubs.

OFFICER JAKE

This is your last chance! Come out now with your hands on your heads!

STUDENT VOICE (O.S.)

Fuck you, coppers!

OFFICER JAKE

Okay, if that's how you want it. (looking at riot troops) Tear gas, ready! (beat) Fire!

Four RIOT POLICEMAN aim their gas guns and fire canisters inside.

CUT TO:

INT. BUILDING

Small canisters EXPLODE through the windows.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOF

More drop on the roof, releasing plumes of gas.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STUDENT 1 (O.S.)

Shit!

TED

Pick em' up and throw em'!

Murray reaches down, tries to pick one up.

MURRAY

They're fuckin' hot!

TED

(screaming)

Everyone out the back!

Everyone jumps off the ledge.

CUT TO:

INT. BUILDING

Engulfed in tear gas, the hallways are impossible to see. Everyone run outs from the roof hacking and coughing. The police rush up to cuff all the demonstrators.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING

Angers boils inside of Mark.

MARK

Bastards!

ANGLE THROUGH NEWS CAMERA

and we see the circus.

CAMERA PANS UP to roof. Ted and Murray still on the ledge.

MURRAY

(to Ted)

I told you the media would come, man!

TED

(shouting)

Hey, everyone in TV land! Earth First!
Long live the planet!

MURRAY

(yelling into megaphone)

Earth First! Earth First!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Amidst the chaos, Murray and Ted SHOUT in unison.

MURRAY/TED
(laughing)
Earth First! Earth First!

POLICE move into combat position. Not amused.

POLICEMAN
Come down now, or we're coming in!

Ted and Murray look at each other.

TED
Think they've got enough for TV
soundbites?

MURRAY
Yep, let's give it up.

They turn around, bend over, and shake the booty.

OFFICER JAKE
(annoyed)
This is the last warning.

TED
(shouting)
Alright, alright! For Christ's sakes!
We're coming down!

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING

On POLICE in riot position.

OFFICE JAKE
Alright, clear the building!

The RIOT TROOPERS rush inside.

STUDENT
(to another student)
What the fuck are they doing?

ANGLE ON MARK

MARK
Fuckers!

Mark in a flurry of anger, jumps up and yells not aware that he's holding GUN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Hey, coppers! Over here!

Everyone turns.

ON MARK

holding a gun. Shit. He realizes it.

POLICEMAN
(shouting)
He's gotta gun! Everyone down!

ANGLE THROUGH NEWS CAMERA

on Mark standing there. Helpless. He drops his gun.

Too late.

ON OFFICER

as he reacts instinctively firing his gun.

A bullet whizzes by Mark.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
He fired his gun! Open fire!

This was not supposed to happen.

ANGLE ON POLICEMAN

aiming at Mark. About to squeeze the trigger.

BLAM!

As soon as the hammer drops, another OFFICER runs into line of fire.

The officer gets hit. Goes down in pool of blood.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
We've gotta an officer down!

Everyone panics.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
Hold your fire! Hold your fire!

Gunpowder SMOKE permeates the air.

ON MARK

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

as he crawls away into the dense bushes and foliage.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRICK WALL

Mark leaps over wall and runs in between buildings.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Mark in between cars. Spots a lone PICK-UP truck. Mark looks around, notices driver is looking away, and he crawls into the back.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING GARAGE

The pick-up truck rumbles out into the main street right past a police car. Mark pokes his head out. Relieved.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS TERMINAL

The pick-up slows to a stop at a red light. Mark waits until the driver looks away and jumps out.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS TERMINAL

Mark heads to a phone booth. Hundreds of office workers hurry past. Images from the news camera flash in the small booth TV monitors.

ANGLE ON MONITORS

a glimpse of Mark holding a gun intercut with the wounded police officer.

ON MARK

as he nervously looks around. No one is looking. This is a bus stop. People don't care. Still, he tries to shield his face and slides out the door.

Across the street, Mark sees a PUBLIC BUS.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS

Mark rests his head against the smudged window. The bus is empty except for a bag lady.

In the sky, a small PLANE flies overhead. The engine BUZZES.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS STOP

Mark practically pulls the bus over himself. He wedges out of folding doors. Driver YELLS.

Mark sees a plane descending. He climbs a small hill and discovers an AIRPORT.

CUT TO:

INT. HANGER -- DAY

A shaft of LIGHT shines through a crack. Slowly, a door opens in the darkness.

LARGE HANGER

filled with dozens of small Cessna airplanes. A huge block of SUNLIGHT pours in from the open bay door.

Mark, amazed by the multitude of planes, inspects one. Rubs his hand down the wing. Turns the prop.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE CESSNA

Mark is totally lost. He looks helplessly at the controls.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER PLANE

A much older, vintage craft. Dust and cobwebs cover the wingspan. Mark cracks the door.

The controls are much simpler...a few knobs, buttons and a rudder stick.

MARK

Okay, set altimeter...uh? (beat) Oh, hell. Fuck it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Switches POWER SWITCH. Click. A low groan. Smoke, fire.
Propeller spins.

Pushes down on power. The engine coughs and sputters alive.

CUT TO:

EXT. HANGER

The plane rumbles outside.

INT. TOWER

Three overweight AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS are too busy playing chess to even notice.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE

Mark reaches over and puts on headset. Flips the switch.
Static transmissions from tower crackle alive.

MARK

(looking back at the tail)
Uh, niner, seven, dollar, eagle, niner
clear for takeoff?

CONTROLLER (V.O.)

What kind of call is that, pilot?

MARK

Uh, sorry, my...

CONTROLLER (V.O.)

Forget it. Cleared for take off. Runway
two.

Shrugs shoulders. On the runway, staring off into the great blue yonder. Closes his eyes. Shit.

Yanks back on the power. Roaring down the runway, the plane sways from side to side.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWER

The controllers, preoccupied with game, don't notice the plane wavering back and forth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Finally gaining altitude, the plane lifts off tilting madly left and right.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE

Fear. Real fear.

MARK
(yelling)
Ah! Fuck!

Desperately tries to get control. Mark levels off a little.

An old relic soaring above the sprawling concrete jungle.

ON MARK

A grin overcomes his sullen face.

DISSOLVE INTO:

INT. DARIA'S CAR

Daria looks like hell. Hasn't slept all night. No makeup. Shouldn't be pretty, but her natural beauty still shines.

The sun beats down hard.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR

The little car moves like a snail through the empty desert.

A SAGEBRUSH rolls across the highway.

No one to even notice. Or even care.

ON DARIA

deep in thought. Reaches down and turns on the radio dial. STATIC and CRACKING noises sputter out of speakers.

Finally, a faint signal. Some old hippie music, Cat Stevens, then an older song.

ANGLE THROUGH WINDSHIELD

More nothing. A barren highway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

DARIA'S AURAL HALLUCINATION

Daria half asleep. Jerks herself awake. Reaches over into her bag, chugs some water.

The static radio suddenly becomes faintly clear.

RADIO (V.O.)

We interrupt this program to bring you the following news. Scientists have just discovered the presence of a large meteor which is in direct path with Earth.

(a deep breath)

The giant rock will collide with the Earth at more than 17,000 miles an hour, and will explode with an energy equal to three thousand atomic bombs. (beat) The estimated collision time is..(radio crackles)

ON DARIA

in shock. She looks up into the sky.

Suddenly, everything becomes BLURRY. Rubs her eyes. Can't see anything. Pulls over to side of the road.

Dizzy. She falls asleep.

DISSOLVE INTO:

EXT. GAS STATION

Daria's pulls in next to the pump. BLOWS horn. No one.

ON SIGN

"Closed. Forever."

ON DARIA

DARIA

(agitated)

Shit.

Looks over, and sees a phone booth.

CUT TO:

INT. PHONE BOOTH

Drops a few quarters. RINGING.

DARIA

(excited)

Mom, what do you mean? There's a meteor heading towards Earth. I heard it on the radio! I know it sounds crazy..

Daria seems confused. The phone line CRACKLES. Hard to hear.

DARIA (CONT'D)

I'm not making this up. You better turn on the television, mom! I'm serious!

PHONE OPERATOR (V.O.)

You have thirty seconds. Please deposit more change.

DARIA

Mom, hold on!

Looks all around for change. No luck.

DARIA (CONT'D)

(frustrated)

Listen, did you hear about the meteor?
 (beat) No? Hello, mom. It's Daria.
 (beat) Yeah, I'm alright. Shit, mom, I don't have any more change.

The phone line CRACKLES and then goes dead. Dial tone purrs along. Slams the phone against window.

DARIA (CONT'D)

Ugh!

CUT TO:

INT. CAR -- DAY

Daria SLAMS the gas pedal. Races across the desert.

Scanning the entire radio dial to find something, anything. Hopeless.

Daria gazes into the blazing white sky and sees nothing.

Just intense, white light, and blue patches amidst fluffy clouds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Daria slams the glove compartment. Pulls out a solitary cigarette. Pops the rusty lighter.

Pushes the burning RED COILS against the tobacco, pulls in a cloud of nicotine.

EXT. AIRPLANE -- DAY

The view from above. The last remnants of a suburban mecca..a sea of condominiums, housing developments..all melding together to form an impressionistic landscape.

The edge of the desert then becomes clear, where man meets the emptiness of nature. Mark descends. Given the circumstances, he looks cool, confident.

Reaches over to the RADIO, turns dial and switches the reception to another frequency.

STATIC. Faint music.

RADIO D.J. (V.O.)

Allright, kids. Coming up in a minute, an all eighties rock block. Yeah, time for a little flashback. A little nostalgia. Yes, can you believe it? The eighties are history. Fin. End. Kaput. Over. Dead. History, man! But before, here are the top headlines of the day...

Mark rubs his temples.

WOMAN DJ (V.O.)

Hi, I'm Marjorie Wilson. Welcome to BBC news. A student demonstration got out of control today at CSU. Police claim a dozen students overtook a campus building, and attacked police in protest. When the police moved in, shots were fired and one policemen was mortally wounded.

CUT TO:

INT. DARIA'S CAR

Daria listening to the same broadcast.

WOMAN DJ (V.O.)

A protester escaped from police. Police in all counties have been alerted.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOMAN DJ (V.O.) (cont'd)

A description of the alleged shooter has been broadcast on all stations. Authorities are still baffled as to the protesters motives, and are questioning witnesses.

INT. PLANE

Anger BOILS in Mark. He rips off headset.

MARK

Our motives? What a fuck-up!

BEATS on dashboard. The engine responds and sputters. Looks down at fuel gage in red zone.

MARK (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Ah! Fuck! Fuck!

Looks down below. A whole lot of nothing. Descends a little lower.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLANE

Gliding over some small mountain tops. The birdlike shadow chases along beneath.

ON MARK

as he banks the plane.

CUT TO:

INT. DARIA'S CAR

Still listening to broadcast.

WOMAN DJ (V.O.)

...police think the suspect left the city and is traveling by car. Police issued a warning that no citizens should pick-up hitchhikers and should report all suspicious persons to authorities.

Turns down volume. Daria looks enthralled. Drags on cigarette. French inhales smoke. Old habits die hard.

A DARK SHADOW crosses over car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Daria looks outside. Sees nothing. Sticks her head outside and looks up to see PLANE.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE

Mark, looking downward, circles back around.

BACK TO DARIA

seeing the plane turn around and head back.

ON MARK

heading right towards car. A bit too low.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR

Daria pitches the cigarette out window.

DARIA
What a freak!

Daria climbs out the window, balancing the steering wheel.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE

Mark sees her giving him the finger.

ON DARIA

DARIA
Asshole!

CUT TO:

EXT. PLANE

Fuel gage past empty. Engine sputters.

Mark pulls higher, and turns it around heading straight down the road.

ON DARIA

seeing the plane again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIA
Doesn't he give up?

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE

Mark attempting to land, veers back and forth.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLANE

A drunk driver. Left wing suddenly drops and almost touches the road.

ON DARIA

looking concerned. This doesn't look right.

DARIA
What the hell is he doing?

ON MARK

shitting his pants.

MARK
(screaming)
Fuck!

The plane BOUNCES off road and back into air. Mark pushes back down landing with a sudden CRASH.

Mark is thrown around like a rag doll. Dust and sand fly into the air.

The plane loses balance. Falls backward. Mark slams his head against the window, completely unconscious.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARIA'S CAR

Daria's car slows to a stop. She runs over to the mangled wreck of metal.

ANGLE ON PLANE

At the plane, she peers in through the plastic window and sees Mark covered in blood. Daria pulls on the door.

Mark falls out into her arms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIA
Are you okay? Oh, my god!

She rubs her hand across his face. Nothing.

DARIA (CONT'D)
(hyperventilating)
Now what? Allright, allright. CPR
first..uh..oh, god!

Daria stands up. Looks around for signs of life. Forget it. Bending back down, she presses her cheek against his mouth. A smile. He's breathing.

Mark's eyes open. Daria's freezes. Mark reaches up, grabs her. He kisses her. She resists.

DARIA (CONT'D)
You freak! What the hell are you doing?
I thought you were dead!

Mark sits upright.

DARIA (CONT'D)
Look, you should see a doctor.

MARK
I don't need a doctor. I'll be fine.
(sarcastically) I've been in worse
accidents.

The plane CRASHES down on its side.

MARK (CONT'D)
(looking at the plane)
Maybe not this bad. (beat) I think I
cut the inside of my cheek.

Daria lets out faint smile.

DARIA
Are you sure you're okay? Maybe we can
call the police on your radio. We're out
in the middle of nowhere.

MARK
(looking over at her car)
Car?

DARIA
Uh, yes it's a car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARK
67' Ghia. Not many from that year.

DARIA
(shocked)
Original 330cc engine, too. Handles like
a Porsche.

MARK
(wiping blood from his lip)
Wow, a girl that knows cars.

DARIA
Look, you seem to be fine, or maybe
you're suffering from internal bleeding
and will keel over and die. I don't
know. (beat) I'll take you to the next
town.

Mark shakes head a little. The burning FLAME of the sun
pokes out from behind Daria.

Mark shields eyes.

FADE INTO:

INT. CAR

Mark takes a pack of cigs out of this shirt pocket.

DARIA
That was a pretty bad crash.

MARK
Not my plane.

DARIA
Rental?

MARK
No, I stole it.

Mark looks over at her. He smiles. Daria smiles, too.

DARIA
What happened? Engine failure?

MARK
Gas.

DARIA
How can you run out of gas?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK

(looking at her dash)

Well, you are too if you don't fill this baby soon.

Daria looks down at the gauge. Almost on empty.

DARIA

Oh, it's always on empty. It'll make it to Vegas on a tank.

MARK

That where you going? Vegas, I mean.

DARIA

Uh, yeah. Well, I'm heading there for something.

MARK

Never been there. What's it like?

DARIA

Wait, where you from?

MARK

Ohio.

DARIA

You're accent did sound kind of funny.

MARK

So, Vegas, is it really like the pictures?

DARIA

Ohio, wow. (beat) Yes, well, no. I mean it's worse than the pictures...too many people.

MARK

I'll enjoy the lights and stuff, but I'm sick and tired of people.

DARIA

But what can ya' do?

MARK

(like her)

Ya', what can you do?

DARIA

Where your headed?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARK

Away. Just away.

The car comes to a fork in road.

MARK (CONT'D)

Ah, the road less traveled.

She laughs, turns left.

ON MARK

as he falls asleep. Daria stares at him intriguingly.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

INT. CAR -- HOURS LATER

ON MARK

waking up from deep slumber.

DARIA

You might as well go back to sleep. I think it's going to be awhile longer.

MARK

I'm fine.

DARIA

Ya' know, there's like nothing to do. The radio won't pick up anything. I'm bored.

MARK

Me, too. (beat) By the way, what did you say about a meteor?

DARIA

Haven't you heard? There is a giant meteor heading towards Earth.

MARK

(bizarre look)

That's impossible. It would take thousands of years once it became visible to even get close to Earth. (beat) It's not like in the movies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIA
(adamantly)
No, I heard it on the radio!

MARK
(interrupting)
Look, I studied astronomy. There might be a meteor coming, but it couldn't possibly collide for like a thousand years. (beat) Same goes for astrology...all a bunch of mythic crap. People believe what they want to believe regardless of the truth.

DARIA
(mad)
I thought I was depressing...but I know what I heard! As soon as the radio comes back on..you'll see.

Mark's focuses on RADIO DIAL.

MARK
(mumbling)
The radio. Yeah, the radio.

DARIA
Oh, I almost forgot. I'm Daria.

MARK
Daria. I like that. Daria. (beat) I'm Mark.

The both look at each other interminably.

DARIA
Mark. Mark from Ohio.

MARK
So why aren't you more hysterical? If a meteor is going to hit Earth, shouldn't you be more worried?

DARIA
There's nothing I can do.

MARK
Ah, a cynic. I finally met someone more depressed than me.

DARIA
Yup.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARK
California girls, hum? A little flaky,
but much more interesting.

DARIA
So you've had experience with lots of
girls?

MARK
Experienced? Me?

Mark laughs.

DARIA
I'm thirty. Still single. Time flies
quickly.

MARK
No way you're thirty! Don't look a day
over twenty-one.

She turns, smiles. He's flattering.

DARIA
(at cigarette)
Got nother' one of those?

Mark reaches into his pocket, lights a smoke. Daria pays
close attention to his hands, face, and simple gestures which
seem innocent and uninhibited.

He leans back in seat, rolls down window.

Wind gusts through hair. Closes eyes.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

A solitary TEAR rolls down Daria's cheek, revealing a lost
expression. She looks up into mirror, wipes it away.

Mark is awakened. Daria tries to regain composure.

MARK
(mumbling)
Where are we?

Daria wipes nose again, and turns away from Mark.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK (CONT'D)
 (continued)
 Is something wrong?

Daria doesn't say a word.

MARK (CONT'D)
 (continued)
 Are you scared? (beat) Hey, if you want
 me to believe a meteor...

DARIA
 (interrupting)
 No. It's not that. I was just thinking,
 uh, about stuff.
 (looking out the window)
 It's just so depressing.

MARK
 I know what you're saying. My life is
 pretty fucked up.

DARIA
 You're still young.

MARK
 C'mon! I'm not going to let you feel
 sorry for yourself.

DARIA
 You know, I'm sorry. Why am I telling
 you this shit? You're going to think I'm
 a freak. Forget it.

MARK
 Alright. That's cool. But trust me, I
 would give anything to be in your shoes.
 My life is truly fucked.

Daria turns. Wipes her nose. Mark locks eyes with Daria.
 Gently leans over and brushes hand against her cheek.

MARK (CONT'D)
 Don't cry.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL DESERT TOWN -- NIGHT

Two intersections crisscross in the middle. A gas station,
 post office and a small motel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A lone traffic light blinks red as if anyone is going to notice.

INT. CAR

Daria looks over at Mark still asleep.

Looks over at the blinking VACANCY SIGN

SUPERIMPOSE: "MIGHTY MOJAVE MOTOR MOTEL"

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL LOBBY

Bare light bulb dangles behind a foot of Plexiglas, illuminating an ELDERLY MAN with deep set eyes and long, skinny nose.

Daria cautiously opens door.

A bell CLANGS loudly, jerking the old man alive.

DARIA
Hello? Are you open?

The old man sets down his book, grunts and groans.

DARIA (CONT'D)
How much are your rooms?

OLD MAN
Thirty.

DARIA
I'll take two.

OLD MAN
Only got one left.

Daria looks out the window. Not a single car.

DARIA
But there isn't anyone here.

OLD MAN
Thirty.

He hacks and coughs up some bile. Spits into jar. Daria squirms.

DARIA
Alright, but we need separate beds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She pulls out her wallet and lays down three ten dollar bills. He slides key through Plexiglas. Picks it up delicately.

OLD MAN
(mumbling)
Sometimes in our greatest despair we find
our true selves.

Daria turns around. Old man is already back into his book.

DARIA
What? What did you just say?

OLD MAN
Third bungalow on your right.

DARIA
No, before that.

OLD MAN
Remember to put the sheets in the corner
if you sully them up.

Daria frowns and walks out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM

This is not the Four Seasons. Daria and Mark turn on lights and illuminate the sparse 70's styled furnishings which are not retro...this is the real thing.

MARK
I appreciate you paying for the room.

DARIA
Forget it.

Mark sits on sofa. Daria plops down. Pulls out a bottle of whiskey.

DARIA (CONT'D)
Want some?

Mark nods and she throws him the bottle. He scurries around and finds two plastic cups.

Daria sips a little. Tosses it down the hatch.

MARK
Occasional drinker, huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIA
Any more left?

He tosses over bottle. She pours remainder in cup.

MARK
Mind if I ask a question.

DARIA
Oh, no, here they come...

MARK
No, nothing like that.

DARIA
Then what?

MARK
I just want to know what a girl is doing driving all alone, on a barren stretch of road...

DARIA
(fumbling)
I just wanted to take a detour. See the desert and stuff. It leads to Vegas, eventually.

MARK
Oh, detour, huh.

DARIA
What does that mean?

MARK
Well, you've got enough sleeping pills in your bag to put an entire herd of elephants under.

DARIA
(shocked)
How did you know what was in my bag?

MARK
When you went to get a room, I was looking for a lighter and...

Daria sits up in bed. Looks with cold stare.

DARIA
(coldly)
Don't ever look in my stuff again, sperm monkey!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DARIA (cont'd)
 You're lucky I don't kick you out right
 now. (beat) I thought I could trust you.

MARK
 (embarrassed)
 I'm sorry. My mistake. Didn't have any
 bad intentions. (beat) I'll leave right
 now.

Mark gets up, picks up jacket and heads for door.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL ROOM

Mark looks around aimlessly. Starts walking towards the main
 road.

The door opens behind him. Daria appears.

DARIA
 (shouting)
 Hey, you can't leave.

Mark spins around.

DARIA (CONT'D)
 Who else is going to give me a cigarette
 out in the middle
 of this fuckin' desert?

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Mark is up watching television without sound. Daria is
 asleep.

ANGLE ON TV

Images fly by as Mark scans channels.

MARK
 Nothing.

On CNN, images of the student protest and gunfight appear.
 He turns up volume ever so gently. Presses ear against
 speaker.

NEWSMAN (V.O.)
 A student protest turned violent today at
 CSU. A police man was fatally shot
 amidst the chaos.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEWSMAN (V.O.) (cont'd)

For more on this breaking story, we go to Margaret Enriquez who covered the protest from peaceful beginning to violent ending.

A Hispanic NEWSCASTER appears in the front of the tie-dye colored building.

NEWSWOMAN

Thanks, Tom. Late yesterday, a rag tag bunch of students led a protest...

BACK TO MARK

listening intently to the coverage.

NEWSWOMAN (CONT'D)

(continued)

...and it all ended in tragedy when a lone student gunman, seen here in a police sketch, shot and killed an officer. He was not apprehended but authorities say capture is close.

ON TELEVISION

Sketch looks like a picture.

Mark switches channel.

ON TELEVISION

Another scene from BLACK AND WHITE movie...the city is devastated.

Panicked citizens SCREAM.

MARK

(silently)

I had a cap gun!

He walks over to the window and pulls back the curtains.

ON MARK

shaking head in disbelief. Fear overcomes his face. Mark rests head on window. Eyes swell up in emotion.

A tear runs down his cheek.

ANGLE BACK ON TELEVISION

Citizens run for their lives, people are trampled, cars crash.

ANGLE ON DARIA

eyes wide open!

DARIA
So it was you?

Mark yanks back from the window.

MARK
What?

DARIA
It was you? At the university.

MARK
No, what do you mean me?

DARIA
I heard you. You said it was only a cap
gun.

MARK
No, well ya, I was just
repeating...uh...what I heard on
the news.

DARIA
Don't bullshit me. That would explain
why your so scared, fidgety.

MARK
I don't know what you're talking about.
I didn't shoot anyone.

DARIA
If you don't wanna admit anything, that's
fine with me. I'm not the kind of person
who would turn on you. I can assure you
of that.

She reaches over and picks up the remote control. She clicks
it until she finds CNN. Mark paces.

MARK
Can we watch something else?

DARIA
Why? You aren't scared of something are
you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK

No. (beat) You gotta get away from all that media shit. You can't believe news is real.

DARIA

Real life, huh. Let's see how real the news is. I'm sure they will cover the story again in a few minutes. (beat) And they'll talk about that meteor, too.

Mark paces the room. Agitated. On CNN, the commercial gives way to newscaster.

Mark races across the room. Slams TV off.

DARIA (CONT'D)

Wow! What got into you?

MARK

(angry)

Fine! You wanna know? My life is over. There is no way I can beat this rap.

DARIA

(frightened))

Do you want to tell me what happened? Maybe I can help?

MARK

I don't need your help. I was framed! Framed! Hah! This is like a fuckin' movie. I'm the Fugitive. No one believes me. (beat) A few weeks ago, I was at home watching TV. Now, I'm on TV!

He picks up the bottle of whiskey and takes a chug.

MARK (CONT'D)

(seriously)

Ah! I should just kill myself.

ON DARIA

Daria jerks back a little. Her expression solemnly changes.

DARIA

No, don't say that.

MARK

Why? Why not! They have pictures of me with a gun! A fuckin' gun! I was at the scene!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARK (cont'd)

They were shooting fuckin' bullets!
 Fuckin' bullets! I pissed my pants!
 (beat) I ran away. It'll take an act of
 god to prove I'm innocent. Fuck!

DARIA

Do they have your gun?

MARK

Oh, the gun! That's even funnier. It
 was a blank gun! We bought it earlier
 that day to get attention when we held
 our protest. A cap gun! (beat) But
 that doesn't matter. I know how the cops
 work. (beat) Look at OJ!

DARIA

Well, who shot the cop?

MARK

(agitated)

I don't know! I don't know! None of us
 had guns! We're fuckin' students just
 trying to get publicity. I had no idea.
 No idea.

Daria shrugs shoulders.

DARIA

I'm the last one you need to
 convince...the last one.

Daria rubs eyes. Mark lights another cigarette. He slams
 his fist against the wall. Tears flow.

MARK

Look, maybe you can help. You can be my
 intermediary with the police. You know,
 let them know my side of the story.

DARIA

Well, okay.

MARK

What? You don't believe me? Do you?

DARIA

No! No! It's not that! I do believe
 you! But maybe we should just part ways.
 I've got enough problems of my own.

MARK

How could they be any worse than mine?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ON DARIA

looking lost in thought. A look comes into her eyes.

DARIA

This is too much. I've gotta get some
sleep.

Daria rolls and falls asleep. Mark paces, sits on bed and
falls on his back.

Blows SMOKE RINGS.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

INT. BATHROOM -- HOURS LATER

Daria enters with her purse. Closes door and turns on the
light. Looks at himself in mirror.

Looks like hell. Tears flow. Pulls out vial of PILLS.

Drops down on floor into the corner. Stares at pill vial.
Looks at toilet. Leans head against wall.

DARIA

Lord, forgive me.

Pulls out a small pack of photos and looks at them intently.
Pictures of family.

Daria reaches into the bag...pulls out a piece of paper.

He unscrews the lid, chugs all the pills and swallows.

Fills the cup again and takes another gulp.

No expression, a blank stare. He's at the end of the road.

BACK IN BEDROOM

Mark rolls over and sees Daria is gone. She looks over at
the door. Still closed. She runs to the window.

Car is still there. Looks around, sees light pouring from
underneath the door. A little relieved, she sits on the bed.

MARK

Daria?

No response.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK (CONT'D)

Daria?

DARIA

(choking)

Huh?

MARK

I'm sorry I exploded on you earlier. I wasn't thinking. I hope you understand.

He hears LOUD COUGHING This doesn't sound right.

MARK (cont'd)

Daria, are you okay? (beat) Wait a second? You're not in there with my pills are you? Daria? Open up! C'mon!

He hears a thud.

MARK (cont'd)

Fuck!

Tries the handle. Locked. Rams the door. It gives a little.

MARK (cont'd)

Daria! Open up! C'mon!

One last time he RAMS the door.

MARK (cont'd)

(shouting)

Daria! Don't do this to me!

Suddenly, a CLICK. He jumps up and opens door. Daria is laying face down.

Pale with red saliva oozing out of mouth, Daria MOANS. He sees the empty vials.

MARK (cont'd)

Oh, god!

He bends down and picks Daria up.

MARK (cont'd)

C'mon! You've gotta puke that shit back up!

Mark pushes Daria over to the toilet. Her body goes limp. He thrusts her abdomen until she convulses. He reaches around and sticks his hand down her throat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Daria vomits a load. Red pills circle around the bowl.

MARK (CONT'D)
C'mon! Again!

Again, he sticks her hand down his throat. She vomits again. Finally, she dry heaves. Nothing left. She passes out.

Drenched in sweat, Mark leans back against the wall. He holds Daria tightly. He stares at her agony stricken face in the mirror.

MARK (CONT'D)
(to himself) God, you're more fucked up
than I am.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

INT. ROOM -- MORNING

Mark stares blankly at the television. Daria, underneath the covers in the bed, wakes up.

MARK
Hey, are you feeling okay?

She picks up damp towel.

DARIA
I'm so tired.

MARK
You've been sleeping for fourteen hours.

Daria just looks at him and stares. Tears roll down her cheek.

DARIA
I'm so sorry. I'm sorry.

She collapses and cries. Mark hugs her.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR -- DAY

Daria in the passenger seat. Mark drives slowly, constantly looking into his rear view mirror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tries turning the radio dial. Nothing. STATIC and other noise.

ANGLE ON BILLBOARD

PETRIFIED NATIONAL FOREST AND PARK. EXIT RAMP 34A.

Mark's attention is pulled away as POLICE CAR speeds down freeway. Ahead, he sees traffic backed up.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR -- DAY

Mark gets out, and unable to see anything, climbs on the top of car. About a half mile ahead, there is a police check point.

A HITCHHIKER, holding a cardboard sign and carrying a rag tag backpack, walks in between cars.

HITCHHIKER

Don't do no good. Gotta wait, son.
Looking for an escaped prisoner from the
local prison.

MARK

Thanks, buddy.

Mark gets back in.

DARIA

Do you think they're looking for you?

He looks around and sees an off ramp. Taps his fingers.

DARIA (CONT'D)

Mark?

MARK

Well, I'm not going to sit around here
and wait for them to arrest me.

He starts the car, guns the engine, and turns right, driving down the side embankment onto the off ramp.

CUT TO:

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE

Mark pulls out two water jugs. He rummages through the medicine isle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As he walks up to the counter, he notices a display of postcards from the Petrified Forest National Park.

MARK
(to cashier)
How far is this place?

CASHIER
Not far. Quickest way is go down the freeway to the next exit, or there is a dirt road up the way.

MARK
Is it a big?

CASHIER
Oh, yeah. I've heard of people getting lost for days. Better be care...

MARK
(interrupting)
Where is that road again?

CUT TO:

INT. CAR -- DAY

Mark rumbles the car down a bumpy dirt road. Daria stares out window. Lost.

Mark sees a sign: "THE PETRIFIED NATIONAL PARK."

DARIA
Where we going?

Mark ignores her.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK RANGER STATION

Mark pulls car up to guard shack and pays the fee.

DISSOLVE INTO:

INT. PETRIFIED NATIONAL FOREST

This place is weird. It's like you're on Mars.

A series of LAP DISSOLVES.

Not a single tree. No vegetation. Nothing. Just rolling waves of sand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Large petrified logs are scattered over the terrain.

Like the ocean, it doesn't look it has a visible end on the horizon.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR

Mark, fascinated, looks at the map and back at the winding road.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR

He pulls up to branch in the road. A sign reads: "METEOR CRATER 10 MILES WEST."

Mark hesitates and turns the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR

Like the lunar lander, the car gleams through the alien terrain.

ANGLE ON MARK

enthralled by the scenery. Seeing a turnout, he pulls over.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR

Mark walks into the barren landscape. Large chunks of petrified rock are scattered everywhere.

ANGLE ON PIECE

Brownish red in color, it's petrified wood, million of years old.

Hundreds of rings spins out from middle, grooves run up the side.

Mark taps on the chunk and it CLANKS like solid rock. A shadow moves over Mark and he jerks around...

Daria stands behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK

Oh, shit! You scared me. (beat) Can you believe this? This used to be a tree millions of years ago. This entire area was a forest, then an ocean, now a desert.

Daria nods.

MARK (CONT'D)

Just to think I'm touching something millions of years...

A green PARK RANGER TRUCK pops over hill. Mark grabs Daria and kisses her.

PARK RANGER slows down, stares suspiciously, but drives onwards.

Daria pulls away. Mark has barely moved.

MARK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I just didn't want to be recognized.

Daria drops onto the ground.

MARK (CONT'D)

You've barely said a word since last night. You're going to be alright. Trust me, okay?

Daria looks at Mark. The sun shines brightly.

Bending down, looking into his eyes.

MARK (cont'd)

I've saved you for a reason. You weren't meant to die.

Daria bursts into tears. Mark reaches over and hugs her tightly.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR

Mark reaches in through the window, grabs the bottle of water.

ANGLE ON DARIA

Mark reaches down and puts a pair of sunglasses on her head. He ties the bottled water into shirt, slings it over his back.

MARK

We're going for a little walk.

They walk off into the extra-terrestrial void.

DISSOLVE INTO:

EXT. VALLEY

Deep VALLEY filled with richly colored red and brown sand flowing like waves in an ocean.

Mark and Daria sit on ledge overlooking the expanse of nothingness.

Intense heat from the sun beats down. Mark looks over at Daria. She looks lost.

Mark leans back on the ground. Staring at the glowing sun, he shields his eyes. Daria's hair blows in the wind.

MARK

Will you please say something?

Wind HOWLS. A gust of sand blows over them like a mist of water. Mark pulls out a mangled joint.

MARK (CONT'D)

(to himself)

This was going to be our victory smoke.

Mark sits up and pulls a lighter from her shirt pocket.

DARIA

Why did you save me?

MARK

Well, having someone die in front of you ain't exactly a pleasant memory.

DARIA

You should just leave me.

Daria looks at him. Mark looks away. Lights joint.

She pulls it from his fingers and takes a drag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
(coughing)
Hey, I've seen enough.

DARIA
But why? Why me? I should be dead right now. Now, I'm only here because of you.
(beat) If I was traveling just a few minutes later, we would've never met.

MARK
Don't start thinking like that. I saved you. It's over. (beat) Everyone is always looking for reasons.

Daria brushes hand across the side of his face. He pulls away.

DARIA
What's wrong?

Mark shakes his head.

MARK
Daria, don't do that.

DARIA
I won't regret it.

MARK
You're just saying that now. I can't get involved. Hell, I'm going to jail!

DARIA
Don't say that, Mark.

Hands the joint to him. He pulls in another drag. She leans her head against his shoulder.

VULTURES squeak nearby and circle around in distance.

DARIA (CONT'D)
I don't know what to do now. How can I look people in the face again?

MARK
(looking down at her)
Oh, god! Strong! (beat) No worries. No one will ever know.

Gently, she leans up, kisses him on cheek. He rubs his hands through her hair.

ANGLE ON MARK

eyes all bloodshot from the pot. Closes his eyes and pours water on his face.

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

ANGLE ON DARIA

He holds her as he stares intently.

MARK

Hey, how are you feeling?

Mark leans over and kisses Daria. Just a peck on lips. Nothing dramatic.

He pulls away. She smiles. Kisses him back. Mark smiles.

Their kissing is tender, not passionate. Very innocent, as if they have no intention of going further.

Daria kisses Mark again, then pulls away. He leans up to kiss her, she turns aside.

Daria leans back down and kisses his forehead, nose, lips. Both laugh.

Mark let's loose and kisses her madly. She hugs him tight. They roll closer to the ledge, and roll down a sandy incline.

Mark hops up on feet and runs down hill. Daria hits a patch of sand. He catches her when she hits bottom.

Sandy dunes. They're just small dots on a vast desert canvas.

Red striped sand, and orangish glowing peaks throw themselves upwards towards the blue sky.

DISSOLVE INTO:

ANGLE ON DARIA AND MARK

embracing each other. Smiling, enjoying the moment. Peaceful. HOWLING of the breeze.

DISSOLVE INTO:

POV OF DARIA'S HALLUCINATION

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

the eroded landscape as it begins to change form, transform and gel into a WAVE. Colors bleed into one another...sky and sand melt into one. A full blown LSD trip.

She turns back to Mark. He leans into kiss her. She tries to focus. It works for a second.

A black SHADOW rolls across the ground.

Above, a giant, burning METEOR bursts through the blurry fabric of the sky.

BACK TO REALITY

Mark and Daria fall. Rip each others clothes off. Carnal, primal, raw. Two naked forms writhing in the dust. Animalistic.

Mark pauses, looks at Daria, she looks at him willingly, accepting, loving.

DARIA

(whispering into his ear)

Yes.

He nods. Gently touches her breast. Her arms. Her legs. He admires her form.

Then back down on top of her. Looks right into her eyes. Sees his reflection.

POV OF DARIA

everything back to NORMAL.

An image of the flaming METEOR appears in Mark's eyes; patches of sand ungulate in the distance.

Dozens of small LUMPS appear. Bigger and bigger...

Writhing like snakes, two naked WOMEN and a MAN rise out of the sand.

A naked MAN and WOMAN appear off in the distance.

Dozens of more naked MEN and WOMEN arise from the ground. All in mad orgy of carnal lust, desire.

Women on women, men on men all grope, fondle one another.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BACK TO REALITY

Mark enters Daria. Just the two of them. Alone. Daria leans up, face to face with Mark. He closes his eyes.

He thrusts.

She kisses him delicately. Powdery brown dust clings to their pale skin.

He stops, leans on her shoulder. A TEAR runs down her face. She closes her eyes, opens them. Hugs him tight.

Daria pulls him back, kisses him again. Total acceptance. Unconditional.

They fall back, side to side, staring at the sky. The BUZZARDS circle above, and their shadows fall across the naked forms below.

MARK

Maybe they'll come down and try to eat us.

DARIA

Death by pecking. I can see the headlines now.

They both laugh. Hold each other's hand tight.

MARK

(looking up into sky)
Did you know we're made out of the remnants of dead stars. The elements that form human life were all forged out of stars. (beat) I'm a real supernova, baby.

DARIA

(melancholy)
So the stars are truly god's eyes.

Daria smiles, peacefully, looking into the sky.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL PARK RESTHOUSE -- DAY

Two square buildings and a concrete water fountain. This place hasn't been remodeled since the Eisenhower era.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Large map of the park is encased in a display.

Mark, inside the car, is listening to radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The student who allegedly shot the officer has now been identified as Mark Frchette. Authorities stated many eye witness sightings somewhere in the Death Valley area.

Daria comes out of bathroom. Mark switches off radio and runs over to water fountain.

Mark sips water. Daria hugs him from behind.

DARIA

(melancholy)

There's nothing left to do.

Mark looks at the park map.

MARK

There's Meteor Crater. Supposed to be pretty cool.

DARIA

(solemnly)

No, I mean, we should get going...from here. (beat) I wanna be right under the meteor when it hits. That way I won't suffer anymore.

MARK

(distracted; sarcastically)

Oh, yeah, the meteor. Where to then?

DARIA

Vegas.

MARK

The meteor picked Las Vegas, huh?

DARIA

(seriously)

You don't believe me, do you?

Mark pulls her tightly. Kisses her deeply.

MARK

Sinatra?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DARIA

He's dead. (beat) I think.

MARK

I've gotta see that Meteor Crater place
before we leave. It's only down the
road...

CUT TO:

EXT. METEOR CRATER ENTRANCE GATE -- DAY

Mark and Daria pay the fee to the clerk. No one else is even
around. Spooky.

CUT TO:

EXT. METEOR CRATER

Mark and Daria ascend some steps to the edge of the crater,
as we PAN LEFT TO

ENTIRE CRATER PIT

This is one big hole. Miles and miles across. Set against
the expanse of a flat desert, this looks like a giant golf
hole on a golfing green. Surreal.

ON MARK

MARK

(looking into crater)
Fuckin' cool. And to think one bigger
than this slammed into the Earth down in
Central America. (to Daria) That's what
killed the dinosaurs.

DARIA

Spare me the science lesson. It's real..

MARK

(hugging her from behind)
Hey, if you're right about that meteor,
then this is just a golf ball compares to
what's coming...

Both stare interminably into the deep abyss. A flock of
BUZZARDS fly overhead.

DISSOLVE INTO:

EXT. PETRIFIED FOREST PARK -- DAY

Their car pulls down towards the highway.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR -- FREEWAY ENTRANCE

Mark lights cigarette. Turns on radio. Daria watches his every move.

Mark pulls over to the side of the road.

DARIA
What's wrong?

Taking a long drag. Mark holds, then exhales.

DARIA (CONT'D)
Mark?

She reaches over to touch him. He recoils, pushes her hand away and jumps out of the car.

Mark SLAMS his hand on hood.

MARK
Damnit!

Mark paces around; gets back in the car.

MARK (CONT'D)
This is why I didn't want to...

His voice trails off.

DARIA
Mark, tell me what's wrong.

MARK
You're a beautiful girl. My life has never worked out like I thought it would. And to meet you, now, just proves it even more.

DARIA
(sternly)
I don't care. Mark, I don't care. I'll stick with you. You're innocent. Whatever happens, we'll go through it together.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK

Daria, you don't understand! I can't keep running away. This isn't a movie!

Daria cries.

DARIA

Mark, I don't care! Then we'll get a lawyer, and the facts...

MARK

You just don't understand.

DARIA

What don't I understand? Tell me!

She leans over to wipe away his tears. He pulls away.

DARIA (CONT'D)

Tell me! What don't I understand?

MARK

I shot the cop! I shot the cop, alright!

Daria recoils.

MARK (CONT'D)

I shot him! I'm guilty! I took a man's life! I can't run away! I've gotta turn myself in. Are you happy now?

DARIA

(confused)

No, no. It's not true. You said you had a blank gun.

MARK

I lied! Okay, I lied!

Daria slumps in seat. Mark reaches over and grabs her.

MARK (CONT'D)

Daria, listen. You're a beautiful person! Don't let my shit interfere in your life. You're going to be fine.

She cries hysterically, weeping in agony.

MARK (CONT'D)

Daria, don't do this to me! Promise me you're going to be okay? Daria? Please?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Nothing. Mark hugs her tight.

DARIA
No, no! I'm not going to leave you!

MARK
Look, we can't keep traveling together.
It's too dangerous for you. I don't want
you to get mixed up in this shit.

Daria's hand reaches around Mark. She wipes the tears from his face.

DARIA
I don't care.

MARK
Okay, I'll meet you in Vegas. It's too
dangerous for me travel on the road.
I'll go back, get the plane, and fly to
Vegas.

DARIA
Promise?

MARK
Yes, I promise.

It's in his eyes. He's not going.

MARK (CONT'D)
Now listen. I'm going to hitchhike back
to the plane. I saw an airfield nearby.
I'll get some fuel, fly to Vegas.

DARIA
Where will I meet you?

MARK
Uh, I don't know. I've never been there.
Wait, how about that sign that says
'Welcome to Vegas'?

DARIA
Yeah, yeah. That's the old sign. It's
on the southern strip.

MARK
Fine, I'll meet you there. Tonight,
about 9 o'clock?

DARIA
Can't I drive you to the plane?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARK

I'll be fine. I gotta go.

Mark kisses her forehead. Looks at her in silence. He grabs his shirt and jumps out. Daria hangs out the window.

DARIA

Be careful, please.

Mark bends down and holds her hand.

MARK

Whatever happens, don't ever forget that
you I saved you for a reason.

A kiss good-bye. Mark runs down road towards the ramp. Hanging out the window, like a lonely puppy, Daria watches him go.

Daria slumps back in car. Like a woman who has just lost everything.

Daria fidgets a little with her seat, reaches down and pulls out Mark's shirt jacket.

Daria holds the jacket up to her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY ON RAMP

Mark hasn't turned back yet. Constantly checking for cars, he pulls up his shirt collar.

Finally, a SEMI-TRUCK pulls over.

CUT TO:

INT. SEMI-TRUCK

A burly, bearded DRIVER gabs away but we hear nothing. Total silence.

Just the low, steady PURR of tires.

ON MARK

tries to feign interest in whatever the driver is talking about. Looking out window, he sees his reflection, closes eyes. Head drops against window.

The driver's voice begins as FAINT ECHO rising until it's in NORMAL TONE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRUCK DRIVER

Hey, so like I was saying, I was in love with my wife. One day I come back from a long haul. I walk in the door, then right before me eyes she lay dead. Bam! Big hole in her head! Blood everywhere'. I was devastated'.

Truck driver wipes his sweaty forehead.

TRUCK DRIVER (cont'd)

Turns out, she was seein' another man. When she tried to break it off he couldn't take it. Boom! My high school sweetheart. (beat) I was fucked up. Didn't work for six months. That's tragedy.

Mark turns his head.

MARK

I'm sorry to hear that, but why are you telling me? (beat) Did you go after the guy?

TRUCK DRIVER

Got thrown away for life. Didn't even have a chance at him. Didn't matter. Because, a ear' later I met up with nother' woman and fell head over heels heels for her. Love again. Strange, huh?

MARK

Well, that's good to her. But don't you ever feel guilty? About loving someone else, I mean.

TRUCK DRIVER

No, not one second. I loved my first wife with all my heart. We forget so easily. One day we're so in love with someone, then bam! We meet someone else and it's like the first person never xisted'. That's some strange shit, huh?

MARK

Yeah, it sure is, man.

TRUCK DRIVER

Call me Geronimo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He flashes a mouth full of black, decayed teeth.

CUT TO:

INT. DARIA'S CAR

Lost in space. Daria staring ahead at the open road. Tears are encrusted on her face. She looks down at Mark's jacket.

When she looks up, there is a line of cars. When she gets closer, it's another police checkpoint.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE CHECKPOINT

Four HIGHWAY PATROL OFFICERS hover over a stream of cars as they slow down.

Daria pulls up. A tall POLICEMAN leans down into car.

POLICEMAN

I'm sorry, mam. But we're looking for some escaped felons. Have you encountered anyone that fits these descriptions?

He holds out two photographs as another officer inspects car. Daria looks at photo.

ANGLE ON PHOTO

A gangly, skinny old man with a long nose...kind of looks like the clerk from the motel.

DARIA

No, I would remember someone like that.

The policeman shuffles the pictures around.

ANGLE ON PHOTO

The other picture is of Mark. It's a blurry printout from the television cameras. Daria looks intently.

OFFICER

Mam, have you see this man anywhere?

DARIA

No.

Daria stares at photo. The officer takes interest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFICER
(suspiciously)
Where are you headed?

DARIA
Oh, uh, Vegas.

OFFICER
Well, drive carefully.

The officer watches her go down the highway.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL LANDING STRIP

A small utility airport in the middle of nowhere. Perhaps for some mining company. A few planes are off to the side.

Off in the distance, the semi-truck pulls over. Mark jumps out carrying a small tank. He runs down and over to one of the planes.

ANGLE ON WINGSPAN

as Mark climbs on top. Opens fuel port.

DISSOLVE INTO:

INT. PLANE

Mark trying to reset instruments. He puts on headset.

Hits strike button. Nothing. Hits it again. A few SPARKS. The propeller CRANKS.

Mark yanks back on the throttle. The plane bumps down to the road.

Mark steadies the wings, pulls back on throttle, then releases brake.

The plane shoots down road like a bottle rocket.

Much smoother than before, Mark lifts into the air. Relief.

He looks down at the desert underneath him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
I'm sorry, Daria.

FADE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY

Semi-truck driver is pulled over at roadblock. An OFFICER reaches up into cab and shows pictures.

Driver nods and point back, up into sky. The officer runs over to car.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE

Mark tunes radio into tower frequency.

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O)
Please identify yourself, vector-three-
niner?

Mark ignores the request.

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O) (CONT'D)
(sternly)
This is a federal offense, vector-three-
niner. Please identify yourself
immediately.

MARK
Alright, old man. I'm the kid
everyone's looking for.

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O)
Please say again?

MARK
I'm coming to turn myself in, but I
didn't do it. I want to clear my name.

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O)
(confused)
Can you give use your coordinates?

MARK
Maybe. (beat) Can you give me an open
line on the radio?

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O)
Something can be arranged. What is your
position?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK

Position? My position is that you get me patched through to the media. Then I'll let you know where I am, okay?

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O)

Okay, vector-three-niner. Please give us some time to facilitate your request. What should we call you?

MARK

Mark.

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O)

Okay, Mark. Sit tight.

MARK

By the way, is there a meteor or a comet headed towards Earth?

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O)

Not that I am aware of, Mark.

Mark kicks back into seat. The sun is beginning to set in distance, casting an orange glow over horizon.

The plane flies right into the void.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DARIA'S CAR -- NIGHT

Hours later. Daria resting her head on the steering wheel. Barely awake. A lone car speeds in other lane.

Far off in the distance, a small patch of glittering lights come into view. Her eyes brighten up a little bit.

She reached down, tries to tune in the radio. Some music stations, talk shows, a news report.

RADIO (V.O.)

The NYSE exchange fell 600 points today. The largest point drop in years. Economists point to rising interest rates and an uncertain economy, but other analysts blame higher unemployment and a general loss of faith in the economy.

Daria stares into the distance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RADIO (cont'd)

In other news, President Bush has vowed to veto any congressional legislation that relates to abortion rights, minimum wage increases, as well as legislation that is aimed at increasing loans for college students. (beat) The Republicans are firm in their resistance towards Democrat positions and....

The announcer's voice FADES AWAY. Daria rolls down window, letting the gusting wind into car.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE -- NIGHT

Illuminated by control panel, Mark's face glows in phosphorescent yellows and blues.

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O.)

Tower to vector-three-niner.

MARK

Vector-three-niner at your service.

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O.)

We've got a live hook up to WXNB public radio which has agreed to air your request. Mark, we're doing this only if you give us your coordinates.

MARK

Deal. I'm about a hundred miles due east of the California airport.

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O.)

Can't you read your coordinates to us from the panel?

MARK

Never got that far in class.

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O.)

(shocked)

You don't have a license?

MARK

Don't worry about me. Put me on the radio, or I'm turning back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AIR CONTROLLER (V.O)

Fine, Mark. (beat) You are now on the line with Doctor Shengaw who will be hosting your broadcast. (beat) Dr. Shengaw you are connected.

MARK

Hello? Hello?

DR. SHENGAW (V.O)

(fuzzy)

Hello, Mark. I just wanted to make you aware that we'll pull the plug if you pull any shenanigans.

MARK

Allright. Don't worry. Are we on the air?

DR. SHENGAW (V.O)

Yes, we're on the air. Listeners, we are airing a special broadcast this evening. We have Mark who was involved in the shooting of the police officer at the CSU, and is on his way to turn himself into authorities. In exchange, we have agreed to air his statement.

MARK

Okay, doc'. I just wanted to tell everyone I didn't shoot the cop. I only had a blank gun. I don't know how the officer was shot.

DR. SHENGAW (V.O)

Okay, Mark. Do want to tell our listeners what your protest was about?

MARK

I don't know. We're trying to cause a little trouble, but I guess I was just trying to do something, anything.

DR. SHENGAW (V.O)

What do you mean, Mark?

MARK

Look, I'm nineteen. I just started college a few months ago. I was trying to raise my voice. I was sick and tired of hearing people talk. I wanted to take action.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARK (cont'd)

(beat) Our generation is so fucked up,
man. So fucked. (beat) So is my life.

DR. SHENGAW (V.O)

Mark, many people would think that you
went too far. Disrupting the city and
the college for an entire day just to get
your point across? Not to mention
causing an officer's death?

MARK

Look, I didn't kill anyone. Besides, our
little escapade will just end up as a
soundbite on CNN. No one will remember.

DISSOLVE INTO:

EXT. VEGAS -- NIGHT

Sodom and Gomorrah. Modern day Rome. Enough glittering
LIGHTS and NEON to dazzle even the most jaded cynic.

DISSOLVE INTO:

INT. DARIA'S CAR

Very close to the main Vegas strip. Daria pulls off highway,
and onto a smaller road that leads directly down to main
strip. The radio news is still on.

NEWSCASTER (V.O)

...we have just received word the student
who allegedly shot and killed an officer
is on his way to turn himself into
authorities. WXNB 89.5 Public radio is
airing transmissions from the student
right now in an attempt to lure him to
land his plane.

Before he can even finish, Daria rolls the dial.

DR. SHENGAW (V.O)

Again, for those of you just tuning in to
our broadcast, we are airing a
conversation with Mark, who was involved
in the student protest at CSU. He
promised to turn himself into authorities
as soon as he lands.

(continued)

Daria is stunned.

Up ahead, she sees the "WELCOME TO VEGAS" sign and pulls car
over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ahead lies the glittering Mecca. Lights and lasers dance about in the midnight sky.

DR. SHENGAW (V.O) (CONT'D)
I'm sure the family of the police officer
will remember.

Reality hits home. Disbelief overcomes Daria's face. Leaning her head against window, the neon lights from far away reflect off glass.

MARK (V.O)
I know we screwed up. We were just
trying to get a little publicity. No one
was supposed to get killed. It got out
of control. I'll take the punishment, but
not for killing someone.

DARIA
(to herself)
You lied to me.

MARK (V.O)
And I want to say something else.

DR. SHENGAW (V.O)
Go ahead, Mark.

MARK (V.O)
I want to apologize to someone. Someone
I met recently who helped me.

DR. SHENGAW (V.O)
Who, Mark?

MARK (V.O)
(beat) Ms. Las Vegas. All I want to say
is that I hope you hear this message and
that you forgive me.

Daria looks out her window. Millions of lights sprinkle the night, almost as if a starry sky lay beneath...

MARK (V.O) (CONT'D)
(continued)
Don't give up. We'll see each other
again. I promise.

Daria falls over sobbing.

BUZZING from the airplane is heard on radio.

FADE TO:

INT. PLANE

Mark is near tears. Switches off radio. HUMMING of the engine is only companion. Up ahead, lights from runway come into view.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY

Dozens of POLICE CARS storm down runway and encircle the entire strip. SWAT teams get into position.

NEWS CREWS set-up posts near the tower.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE

Wiping away the tears, Mark reaches down and turns off engine.

The engine SPUTTERS and conks out.

ROAR of wind underneath the wings pierces the sky.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUNWAY

The plane slowly comes into view, teetering dangerously from side to side.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWER

AIR CONTROLLERS scramble around the room.

CONTROLLER
(to himself)
C'mon, kid. Don't fuck this up.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE

ON MARK

Unable to control the strong downward pull, Mark pulls back on stick, but without power the plane drops fast.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The tail swings far too much to right.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLANE

Veering too far to right. It lands violently on front wheels.

Bouncing up wildly, the plane spins in a circle until the bottom flips over.

CRASH. Metal and glass EXPLODE.

ON MARK

Blood drips out of his mouth.

POLICE converge, guns drawn. Mark doesn't move. An officer leans down, holds his wrist for a pulse.

OFFICER
Better call an ambulance.

CUT TO:

INT. DARIA'S CAR

ON DARIA

DR. SHENGAW (V.O)
...as we lost contact with Mark, we've just learned that he crashed his plane in a failed landing attempt.

CUT TO:

INT. DARIA'S CAR

DR. SHENGAW (V.O)
...a terrible tragedy upon another terrible tragedy, folks. This has been an unexpected turn of events.

Daria reaches over, turns off the dial. Beyond tears, zombie like, she sits upright in seat. Frozen.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR

The car door opens. Daria rolls out onto ground and vomits. Again and again until she is dry heaving.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cars ZOOM past. Delirious, she stands up. Walks down the middle of road.

Then, she falls down on her knees.

DARIA'S HALLUCINATION

ANGLE ON LAS VEGAS SKYLINE

looking down the asphalt road, up at the Vegas skyline. A mecca of LIGHT as if the all the stars in the universe were squeezed into a little ball.

Above, a red FLAMING METEOR bursts through the sky.

Miles wide, the METEOR looks surreal. Almost painted into the black night sky.

Within seconds the huge meteor CRASHES into Las Vegas.

SLOW-MOTION

SUPER SLOW-MOTION

as if we're watching paint dry.

These images are akin to the proverbial image of the bullet piercing an apple.

But, this is the absolute destruction of Las Vegas as we know it. C'mon, it's about time, folks.

NO SOUND.

PURE SILENCE in a city of constant noise.

A silent movie. Slow.

Bits of matter EXPLODE. These superficial monuments of capitalism BURSTS into billions of chunks and tiny bits.

LIGHT BULBS, unattached, are still lit as they fly into the sky directly at us.

Like being inside a giant firework explosion. A blinding burst of LIGHT.

REM'S "its the end of the world as we know it(and i feel fine)" song FADES IN.

MUSIC OVER:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Flying towards the CAMERA in SUPER SLOW-MOTION we see up-close, in extreme detail, FADING from one image to another..amidst all the dust and debris...

CASINO CHIPS twisting and turning...BLACKJACK TABLES spinning out of control...CHAMPAGNE BOTTLES toss around like carbonated bubbles...

DOLLAR BILLS...

TIGERS...

BOTTLES...

PARTIAL HEAD OF THE LUXOR SPHINX...

SLABS OF ROAST BEEF...

CIGARS...

WRIST WATCHES...

MICROPHONES...

DICE...

DANCERS...

ROLLER COASTERS...

PANES OF BROKEN GLASS...

ROMAN STATUES...

BEER BOTTLES...

SHOES...

DOLLARS BILLS...

ORANGES...

QUARTERS...

NEON SIGNS...

CHUNKS OF CONCRETE...

A DECK OF CARDS... A SINGLE ACE...

and millions of more random things all colliding in a surreal symphony of destruction in the midnight sky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

It's Las Vegas in a blender.

A bizarre sight.

Each object takes on a more significant meaning the longer it stays on screen.

As SONG fades away.

DISSOLVE INTO:

A huge plume of SMOKE and ASH erupting underneath and pushing what is left upwards, towards the heavens.

DISSOLVE INTO:

ON DARIA

as the bright lights illuminate her face.

A gentle smile overcomes solemn expression. She falls backwards onto road. Unconscious.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. MIDDLE OF ROAD

A hand brushes over Daria's face. Daria's eyes open.

Daria instinctively grabs the hand and is shocked to see a small blind GIRL.

Dozens of CHILDREN surround Daria. Most are blind, some are physically deformed. A couple are on crutches.

Daria looks and sees a school bus to the side of the road. On the side it reads "St. Mary's Deaf and Blind Academy."

An older WOMAN is off to the side on a vintage era cell phone.

WOMAN

(panicking)

We're on the outskirts of Vegas and we found a woman in the middle of the street.

Daria pushes herself up into the children's hands. Daria looks up ahead. Vegas is still intact. Nothing has changed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A brown haired GIRL on crutches sits down, sensing Daria, but not looking at her.

BROWN HAired GIRL
Hi, I'm Laura.

Daria can't even speak. Just cries. All the children hover around her.

Daria jumps up. In terror, she runs away from kids like they have the plague.

WOMAN
(yelling)
Are you okay?

Daria gets back in her car.

CUT TO:

INT. DARIA'S CAR

Falling down on the seat, she starts the engine and pulls back onto road. Drives away.

Up ahead, the road is barren. A few street lamps. Daria looks into the rear view mirror.

ANGLE ON KIDS IN MIRROR

All the kids wait anxiously.

Daria turns around.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL BUS

Daria stops the car next to the roving band of children, who grab at window. She watches them smile. She's eager to have a little of their hope and unconditional love.

The woman on the cell phone gathers up children.

A few CHILDREN break free. They run over to Daria who stares at them in awe.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR

Daria looks at the children giving unselfish, unconditional love. A precious, fleeting moment of pure innocence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A little girl, in a pink dress, presses her face against window.

Daria reaches over to the seat. Her hand touches something.

Inside Mark's shirt pocket is CASSETTE TAPE. Looking at the tape, she stares at the battered plastic shell.

She puts it into tape player. Tape static CRACKLES.

REM'S "Fall On Me" SCREAMS over speakers.

FADE INTO:

INT. HOSPITAL

Sterile stainless steel hospital room. Pure white.

Mark lies unconscious in a bed. Bright sunlight pours inside. Half of his body is covered in bloody bandages.

Suddenly, the door opens.

Daria slowly walks inside. She kneels down beside the bed.

Daria stares lovingly at Mark. She holds Mark's hand to her face.

DARIA

Mark, I know you can't hear me. (beat) I thought you were dead. But you couldn't be. I realized fate wouldn't fail me. (beat) So, see, it all worked out. The officer confessed to the shooting. You're free, Mark.

Mark lies unconscious. Tears roll down her cheeks.

Daria climbs into the bed, she lays down beside him. Holds him tightly. Shafts of sunlight make the whole room glow.

ON DARIA

as she looks at Mark. She smiles.

Suddenly, Mark's hand flinches. Daria holds his hand up to her lips.

DARIA (cont'd)

Mark, I love you. I'm not letting you go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REM's "Fall On Me" grows louder, and louder...

MUSIC OVER:

PAN UP TO

the black white and blue sky.

HIGHER INTO OUTER SPACE

The black night of the universe overlooks Earth. The silky night is dotted with pin points of WHITE STARS burning bright.

DISSOLVE INTO:

A blurry, pixalized image of thousands of distant stars. Looks like a bad television signal, or a signal from an alien transmission. Focus on one YELLOW STAR as it burns brighter than the others.

FADE INTO:

A CLOSE-UP ON BRIGHT YELLOW STAR

Burning intently. Then, like an exploding match tip, it becomes a giant red fireball. A true supernova. Expanding. And expanding...

The edges of the red fireball seem to keep growing in an infinite horizon.

At the point of its greatest expansion, it freezes.

LONG PAUSE

It suddenly contracts inwards. Arcs of fire pierce inwards. Everything rushes back into the middle.

Slowly it gets smaller and smaller till it disappears into the black void, and then...

EXPLODES into a large GASEOUS CLOUD, which slowly dissipates.

There is nothing left but a faint, lingering cloud,

as if nothing had ever existed.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END