

"CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND"

by

Steven Spielberg

REVISED

(SS changes included)

Synopsis

During a power blackout, Water and Power employee, Roy Neary, has contact with Unidentified Flying Objects which leaves him profoundly disturbed. He tries desperately to get someone to believe him. But no one does, particularly the Air Force, who have sent representatives to check out reports of "flying saucers". He discovers a group of people who have had experiences similar to his and he can relate to them. Other than this small group of believers, however, he is regarded as a nut.

A TV Station learns that Roy has reported sighting a UFO and tries to interview him. The interview is a disaster but it's on the 6:00 News anyway and then Roy's whole life begins to go to pieces. He loses his job, his neighbors won't talk to him, his wife tries to get him to see a psychiatrist, his children are afraid of him and he finally does behave as if he is unhinged....

He frantically begins to build a mountain in the family room of his house. This is a totally compulsive act and yet he seems to know just where each shrub and rock should be placed as he shovels in dirt, shrubs, rocks and whatever else is needed to complete his project. Finished, he sits back to rest in front of the tv set and suddenly realizes that he is looking at an exact replica of his mountain. It is an area in Wyoming which is being evacuated as a result of a poisonous chemical gas shipment being derailed. As Norman rushes for the airport, we see another believer, Jillian Guiler, preparing to go to the mountain. She has seen the newscast also.

In his attempt to get to the mountain, Roy almost succeeds in getting past the Army roadblocks but is caught and taken to Lacombe, an Army PR man, for questioning. Lacombe has been involved in searching for answers to UFO's for a long, long time and is genuinely interested in Roy's story. He suspects that Roy and several other "gate crashers" like Roy (including Jillian Guiler) have a right to be here and tries to prevent the army from airlifting them out of the area but he doesn't succeed.

The "gate crashers", led by Roy's escape from the helicopter and fan out over the side of the mountain in a last desperate attempt to fulfill whatever destiny has brought them to this place. As Roy and Jillian reach the crest and gaze into the box canyon they are amazed.

The entire area is taken up with men and equipment of every possible kind including ~~Acoustic~~ Noog Synthesizers upon which certain chords are being played to which "something" is responding. As they watch, the stars in the sky begin to rearrange themselves as if in response to the chords and now unfolds an unimaginably spectacular scene which culminates in the landing of the Mother Ship, a space ship of unbelievable proportions.

at this meeting of the worlds, Roy Neary leads a select group of volunteers onto the Mother Ship... perhaps to be the first human representatives to visit an alien world.

TRAFFIC CONTROL CENTER (NOTE: Originally Scene 40)

1 x

INTERIOR - AIR ROUTE TRAFFIC CONTROL CENTER - MIDWATCH

Two radar scopes side by side. Four controllers sit side by side, a fifth controller sits slightly behind on a high chair. There is some backtalk from speakers on the adjoining sectors. Camera closes in on controller. He is a little tired, a bit bored, yet there is an alertness sensed. The sector is a high altitude radar sector. The time is the midwatch. Across the room another controller gets up from his sector - yells mildly across the room.

OTHER MAN

Harry, keep your eye on that pointout I gave you. He's on 122.5. Be right back.

CLOSE - HARRY

Raises his hand affirming this. He peers into scope. We hear VOICE of AIREAST 31 pilot.

AIREAST 31

Air Traffic Control, you have any traffic for Aireast 31?

Harry looks more intently at scope. There are only three full data blocks and one partial data block. Two going the same direction are fifteen miles apart. The third going the other direction is quite a distance away from AIREAST. The rest of the scope is clean.

HARRY

Aireast 31 negative. Only traffic I have is a TWA L-Ten Eleven your six o'clock position, fifteen miles and an Alleghany DC-9 your twelve o'clock fifty miles. Stand by one. Let me take a look at the broadband.

Harry reaches up, pushes one button. Radar scope changes from narrow-band computer radar to broadband normal radar. Harry takes a quick glance, pushes button again, then another button, looks at primary in computerized form. There is a non-beacon target in Aireast's vicinity. Harry peers more intently. Interphone controller leans over and looks as does coordinator. While this is going on.

AIREAST 31

Aireast 31 has traffic two o'clock three to five miles, slightly above and descending.

x 1 (cont'd)

1A

1 (cont'd) x

HARRY

Aireast 31 roger. I have a primary target about that position now. We have no known high altitude traffic, Let me check with low.

Turns to interphone man:

HARRY

Call low and see if they know who this is .....

AIREAST 31

(cutting Harry off)

Center, Aireast 31, traffic's not in low. He's one o'clock now still above me and descending.

HARRY

Can you tell aircraft type?

AIREAST 31

Negative, no distinct outline. The target is brilliant. Has the brightest anti-collision lights I've ever seen - alternating white to red and the colors are striking.

Other sector controllers now start looking and listening. The coordinator reaches up, pushes a button, calls someone and mumbles indistinctly. A second VOICE comes on RADIO.

TWA 517

Center this is TWA 517. Traffic now looks like extra bright landing lights. I thought Aireast had his landing lights on.

COORDINATOR

What do you have here, Harry?

AIREAST 31

Say again TWA 517.

TWA 517

(Making himself clearly understood)  
Do you have your landing lights on?

HARRY

(breaking in)

TWA 517, Indianapolis Center, Aireast is your twelve o'clock position fifteen miles same direction and altitude. Ident please.

(Turns to coordinator)

Aireast claims he has unusual traffic almost at his altitude. I don't know who it is.

No response - an ident appears TWA 517.

HARRY

Aireast 31 squawk ident ... break ...  
TWA 517 do you have Aireast in sight?

TWA 517

Affirmative.

HARRY

TWA 517 do you have Aireast's traffic  
in sight?

TWA

(saying this cautiously)  
Yes ... we have it now and have been  
watching it.

HARRY

What does traffic appear to be doing?

TWA 517

Just what Aireast 31 said.

HARRY

Aireast 31, I have that primary now at  
your ten o'clock position five miles.

AIREAST 31

That's affirmative.

HARRY

Proceeding northeast bound. No altitude  
readout.

AIREAST 31

Uh, roger. He's in a descent about 1500  
feet below me, wait a second...stand by  
one ... okay center. Aireast 31 traffic  
has turned heading right for us at altitude.  
We're turning right and leaving flight level  
350.

Now all are on alert.

COORDINATOR

Get on the horn to Wright-Patterson and  
see what the hell they could be testing  
up there.

HARRY

Aireast 31 roger, descend and maintain  
Flight Level three-one-zero ... break.  
Alleghany DC-9 turn 30 degrees right  
immediately ... traffic twelve o'clock  
two zero miles Aireast jet descending to  
FL310.

AIREAST

Luminous traffic now in angular descent  
and exhibiting some non ballistic motions.

HARRY

AIREAST

OK Center - Traffic is coming on strong.  
Ultra bright and really moving.

TWA 517

This is TWA 517, we're going to go a little  
right to keep away from traffic also.

HARRY

TWA 517 roger deviations to right of course  
approved.

AIREAST 31

Center, Aireast 31 is out of three-one-zero  
and traffic has passed off our ten o'clock  
500 yards and really moving.

TEAM SUPERVISOR

Ask them if they want to report officially.

HARRY

Aireast 31 roger, report level Flight  
level three-one-zero. TWA 517, do you  
want to report a U.F.O.?

A thoughtful moment passes...then.

TWA 517

Negative. We don't want to report.

HARRY

Aireast 31, do you wish to report a  
U.F.O.?

AIREAST 31

(after a beat also)

Negative. We don't want to report.

HARRY

Aireast 31. Do you want to file a  
report of any kind?

AIREAST 31

I wouldn't know what kind of report to  
file.

x 1 (cont'd)

HARRY

1 (Con't)

Me neither. I'll try to track traffic to destination.

AIREAST 31

And show us level at three-one-zero now. The gals tell me that passengers were snapping pictures of traffic during that close pass.

HARRY

(to team supervisor)

Those, I'd like to see.

(into mike)

Alleghany Triple 4 turn right to intercept J-8. Resume normal navigation. TWA is level at three-one.

The team supervisor and flow controller leave the scopes as the supervisor heads for the telephone desk.

COORDINATOR

What's in the book about this kind of thing?

TEAM SUPERVISOR

Hell if I know. The Air Force started writing it 20 years ago. Let them finish it.

CAMERA pushes in on desk placard: TEAM ACTION '77.

x 2

CUT TO BLACK

2 x

CREDITS OVER BLACKSOUND: AIR TRAFFIC CHATTER BLENDING TOWARD EXTERIOR NIGHT SOUNDS.

CUT TO:

3 CLOSE - BARRY GUILER - NIGHT INTERIOR

3

Four year old Barry is having a restless night. A gentle breeze flares his bangs. A WHIRRING SOUND interrupts this. Little Barry's eyes come open as a soft red glow plays on his face.

WHAT HE SEES . . . . .

On the nightstand next to his bed, one of Barry's battered toys has come on. It is a Frankenstein monster who raises his hands as if to strike when its pants fall down and its face blushes bright red.

Barry sits up in bed and looks around him.

3 (Cont'd)

3 (Cont'd)

THE BEDROOM

All of his battery toys are working in different places around the room. Tank, rocket ship, police car, 747, drunk chugging brew.

PHONOGRAPH - CLOSE

Playing a scratchy "Sesame Street" record .... softly.

Barry gets out of bed and looks out the window. In the distance the SOUND of barking dogs. The backyard is dark and utterly still.

4 INTERIOR - HALLWAY - NIGHT

4

The bedroom is at the far end of the hallway. Barry moved forward, curiously. He turns into the living area.

5 INTERIOR - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

5

This room is dark, save a sixty watt blue nightlight. Something, however, is out of place. All the windows are open and night is breathing through the laced curtains. Four year old Barry looks again .....

THE FRONT DOOR IS WIDE OPEN - THE PORCH LIGHT IS SPILLING IN.

SOUND - O.S. - RATTLECLOSE - BARRY

He turns ready for fun. Leaves here and .....

6 INTERIOR - THE KITCHEN - NIGHT

6

A SLOW PAN shows Barry the room. Once again the windows are open and the room is breezy. The backdoor is ajar and rattling against the safety chain. PAN DOWN to show the dog door. It is completely off its hinges and lying on the floor.

CLOSE - BARRY

He looks up and reacts .... a weak light opens across the little boy's face.

ANGLE - REFRIGERATOR

The door is swinging open. There is foodstuffs in a messy pile around the icebox door.



6 (Cont'd)

6 (Cont'd)

CLOSE - BARRY

He looks in another direction and is suddenly startled. Fear is just as suddenly replaced with a kind of shy playfulness. Barry giggles and looks away ... he turns back and laughs, slaps his side, turns away and looks back again ... bursts out laughing. A game is being played out. Little Barry rocks back and fourth like a chimpanzee as if imitating what he is watching. He covers his eyes and peek-a-boos. He spins on his bare heels. He cocks his head to one side and rotates it in slow sensuous movements. He is having a wonderful time. An interior wind begins moving Barry's clothes.

7 INTERIOR - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

7

JILLIAN GUILER, Barry's mother, is asleep in the next room. Jillian has had the flu and her bed is in a state of mild disarray. The condition of the rest of the bedroom, however, is as ransacked as that of a sloppy six year old's. Everything is everywhere but where it should be. Nothing has its place here. The same wind enters her room and blows around some featherweight clutter. The bedside table is chaotic with pills, nasal sprays, half a sandwich and a can of Coke. A few magazines and a couple of half finished charcoal sketches are by the side of the bed. Jillian is under the covers but she is still wearing a robe. The television set is on ... giving us the impression that she fell asleep before she intended. We HEAR LAUGHTER from the TV set a couple of times, a sitcom is on. During a lull in the hilarity we HEAR BARRY'S LAUGHTER OFF CAMERA. This immediately wakes Jillian up. She turns and looks at the bedside clock: "10:40 PM".

8 OUT THE WINDOW

8

Little Barry is running off in the night. He is laughing and happy .. like he's chasing after a puppy. Just as he disappears over a hill, Jillian looks out the window and sees nothing.

9 CLOSE - JILLIAN

9

She turns and walks to Barry's room. It's empty. She yells:

JILLIAN

Barry!

She grabs her coat and some kleenex and goes rushing out of the room to the front yard. Still no Barry. The rush of anxiety floods. She doesn't know where to look first.

CUT TO:

RONNIE NEARY moves into the room with her youngest daughter Sylvia trailing behind. Ronnie has her eyes closed and is feeling her way around the house.

RONNIE

If there are seven days in a week,  
and your Mother is home all seven  
of them, how many days are left to  
your Mother?

Brad figures this on calculator.

BRAD

Zero!

NEARY

Ronnie, open your eyes.

RONNIE

See, I can walk through the whole  
house like this and make the beds,  
put the coffee on, tuck the kids in.  
I feel like Toby's hamster. It's  
not healthy.

NEARY

Open your eyes Ronnie. Watch this.

She does and Neary pushes a button on the train set. Humming a nondescript tune that indicates when Neary is pleased with Neary, Ronnie watches a little sailboat motoring toward a drawbridge as the train approaches it. Automatically the train stops...the bridge raises...the boat passes underneath, one-two-three. Neary is very pleased.

RONNIE

(sighs and opens the newspaper)  
Bet in two weeks it'll be in the  
basement with the Auto-tennis and the  
electric toilet. Look, it's better than  
the worm ranch you had in here. Jesus,  
can't we do something? I'm serving time  
in this house.

NEARY

We got out last weekend.

RONNIE

Walking across the street to the Taylors  
is not getting out of the house.

TOBY

He took my luminous paints.

NEARY

(takes calculator and  
picks up toy boxcar)

Forget the calculator. Okay Brad.  
Now this boxcar is sixty feet long.  
You stop your train. Okay. One-third  
of that boxcar is now across a switch and  
(dramatically)  
there's another train coming. How many  
feet do you move the train forward to  
clear the switch?

BRAD

(thinks a beat)

I wouldn't move it.

NEARY

Why not?

BRAD

(a gleam in his eye)

I want to see it get smashed!

Ronnie sets the movie section in front of Neary who reluctantly  
explores it while she takes a compact mirror close to her mouth.

RONNIE

Last weekend you promised everybody  
a movie this weekend.

BRAD

You also promised Goofy Golf.

RONNIE

I smile too much. My mouth is  
thinning out.

(holds up a yellowed  
photograph for Roy  
to see)

Look at my Mom when she was my age.  
I already look two years older than  
her. Do I look two years older than  
her?

NEARY

Hey! Guess what? Pinnochio's in town.

RONNIE

Now...this is Mom at thirty-five  
without the glamour makeover.

NEARY

The boys have never seen Pinnochio.  
Are you guys in luck!

BRAD

Who wants to see some dumb cartoon  
rated 'G' for kids.

NEARY

How old are you?

BRAD

Eight.

NEARY

Wanna be nine?

BRAD

Yes.

NEARY

We're seeing Pinnochio tommorrow.

RONNIE

That's a fine way to win over your  
children.

NEARY

I'm not serious. I'm just saying  
I grew up with Pinnochio. If kids  
are still kids they're going to  
eat it up.

x Roy hums the 'When You Wish Upon A Star' tune then trails off. x  
Ronnie looks at Roy unconvinced.

NEARY

You're right. Fellas, you can  
make up your own minds and I will  
not influence you in any way. Tommorrow  
you can play miniature golf which  
means a lot of waiting your turn and  
pushing and shoving and maybe scoring  
a zero--or--you can see Pinnochio which  
has music and animals and magical stuff  
and things you will remember for the  
rest of your lives. Now let's vote.

BRAD, TOBY, SYLVIA

Golf!!!

RONNIE

Alright, to bed you guys.

This is the family room of a suburban house that has been confiscated and made into a workroom that looks more like a hobby room run by the Salvation Army. Mechanized and electrical inventions rot half-forgotten on the ceiling and walls. There are enough adult toys lying around to rob a child of his childhood. The most prominent thing in the room is an HO gauge railroad layout on a large table. The tracks run through very elaborate Tyrolean terrain with lots of mountains and lakes. ROY NEARY and his eight year old son, BRAD, sit side by side. Roy is sculpting miniature terrain and helping Brad with his math all at the same time. A stack of fourth grade arithmetic sits forgotten in the center of things. TOBY NEARY, six and a devil, zips into the room angry.

TOBY

You stole my luminous paint.

NEARY

I didn't steal anything.

TOBY

I don't steal stuff of yours.

Brad throws down his pencil.

BRAD

I hate arithmetic.

NEARY

You're not listening to me. Math is like learning a new language.

BRAD

I like English

NEARY

You're not trying hard enough.

BRAD

Train engineers don't need arithmetic.

NEARY

You wanna bet? The stationmaster assigns you 18 cars, then he says, make two trains with an equal amount of cars. What do you do?

Brad produces his father's pocket calculator and waves it around.

BRAD

It doesn't matter cause I'll have one of these.

No wait. Dad said we could finish watching THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Across the room the telephone rings and Ronnie moves over to it.

RONNIE

(calling back at Roy)

That picture is four hours long.

(into phone)

Hello. Oh, hi Earl.

NEARY

(almost to himself)

I told them they could only watch five of the Commandments.

RONNIE

(into phone)

I can't relay all that. You better talk to him, Roy. Earl's on.

Roy Neary pulls himself up and begins gingerly picking his way across the HO set to the phone.

NEARY

(grumbling)

My kids don't want to see Pinnochio. What a world!

RONNIE

(into phone)

He'll be here. He's crossing the Alps.

Roy gives her a silent, sarcastic "ha,ha" and gets the phone. Ronnie reverses her direction and snuggles up to Roy kissing his ear. Sylvia kisses his cheek and they take turns being affectionate while Roy listens.

EARL JACKSON

I got a call from the Load Dispatcher. There's a drain on the primary voltage. They've lost half a bank of transformers at the Gilmore sub-station. It's gonna hit the residential pretty soon so put on your pants while you've still got the light.

"CLICK". Roy stands with the buzzing phone, the crying kid, the noisy train. It is at this precise moment that all the lights go out and the train winds down leaving a stunned room and ...

The entire room is blackened except for the little blue lakes on the train layout that glow green in the dark ...

TOBY

(outraged)

I told you he stole my luminous paints!

11 INTERIOR - APARTMENT BUILDING CORRIDOR - NIGHT

11

GRIMSBY, a no-nonsense type, leaves his apartment in a great rush carrying his hard hat. He confronts the elevators, pushes a button, jams it a couple of times extra even though the elevator arrives almost immediately. The doors open and Grimsby steps in. He is immediately taken aback by the presence of a lady in the elevator, attractive, cheap-glamorous. He regains his composure as the elevator doors slide closed. A moment passes and the black-out hits the corridor with the speed of no light. The mechanical whirr of the elevator winds down and we HEAR A MUFFLED VOICE from low down, behind the doors.

GRIMSBY (O.S.)

Shit!

A long beat, then we hear a husky female voice.

FEMALE VOICE

What's your name?

12

OMITTED

12

OMITTED

13

14 INTERIOR - MONITOR SYSTEMS CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

14

This is the brain center of the local Department of Water and Power. A bank of phones are ringing continuously with only one man to answer and holler his queries to a group of trouble technicians who keep an update on a wall display panel. A completely harried Load Dispatcher called IKE spots Neary ENTERING through the main doors. He waves him over. x

Neary is shy about joining a squad of grizzled trouble foremen, most of whom are in their late forties. IKE is in the middle of a briefing on the other side of the room. He has two phones in his hands. The way he is nursing the right-handed phone, one can bet there's a supervisor hanging on at the other end. x  
x  
x

IKE

A 27 KV line failed at the Gilmore sub-station. All the breakers opened and we began losing feeders. We want to pick up the system before folks start shaving.

McGOVERN

How can we pick it up? The network's still falling.

ASSISTANT

(from across the room)  
Tolono is dark.

McGOVERN

(emphatically)  
Jesus, Ike, everything's comin' down.

IKE

To add insult to injury I got reports of vandalism on the line. I got 890 megawatt lines down all over.

ASSISTANT

Crystal Lake is dark. We can't carry this much load.

IKE

Call Muncipal Lighting, Ohio. Tell 'em we're cycling down and need a fix.

(back to his men)

We can't get the juice flowing until this 500 KV single circuit tower is operational. McGovern, grab a splicing crew and get out there.



14 (Cont'd)

14 (Cont'd)

McGOVERN  
I'm not too familiar with the normal tension in that area.

NEARY  
(volunteers softly)  
If there's no wind, normal tension for the sag is about 15,000 pounds per wire. I was a journeyman out that way a couple of years ago.

McGOVERN  
Good ... a volunteer! You take this job.

x

x

NEARY  
That's not up to me. Where's the Supervisor anyway?

x

x

The other men titter.

IKE  
(almost whispering as he holds up the telephone, one hand covering mouthpiece.)  
In an elevator and trying to run things from those little trouble phones. Neary, you're taking Crystal Lake.

x  
x  
x

x  
x  
x

NEARY  
I am?

IKE  
I can't help it. Everybody's everywhere. If you have any questions ... get on the horn to me direct.

ASSISTANT  
Got a fresh impedance coming up. It's not an overload ... it's a drain. Lines M-Mary 10 through M-Mary 15. And Municipal Lighting is asking to be cut free.

IKE  
Neary, you know where that is?  
(without waiting for an answer)

Okay. Get a splicing crew and high wire act, and Neary ....  
(he holds up phone)  
He's counting on you!!

x  
x  
x  
x

x  
x  
x  
x

PUSH IN ON NEARY, weighing his new responsibilities.

IKE (Cont'd)  
(shouts to Assistant)  
You tell Municipal Lighting we're going to candle power in ten minutes.

15

15

INT. NEARY'S CAR - NIGHT

x Neary's moving car is a smaller version of his workroom at home. x  
 It looks like the interior of a 747. He has a network map spread  
 out over the steering wheel as he searches for the problem co-  
 ordinates, a pen light sticking out of his mouth. Neary turns  
 for a moment to study a picture of an electric car from Popular  
 Mechanics that's fastened to his dashboard. He smiles wistfully  
 for a second as police call start squabbling over his broad  
 band radio.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

x This is Sheriff's Dispatch. Do I have x  
 x a patrol car near Reva Road? x

SIX-TEN (V.O.)

x Hello County. This is highway patrol x  
 x six-ten. We're on Reva. Can we help x  
 x you boys out? x

DISPATCH (V.O.)

x If you would, thank you. See the x  
 woman 211 Reva Road. Something  
 about the outdoor lighting. She's  
 in a state, barking dogs, go figure  
 it out.

Neary comes alert...what the hey! He picks up the mobile phone.

NEARY

x (out loud) x  
 x Outdoor lighting!! TR-eighty-eight, x  
 eighteen to Trouble Foreman. x

POWER CO. (V.O.)

x Here's trouble. What d'ya want. x

NEARY

Have you guys restored power to  
 Tolono- over.

POWER CO. (V.O.)

Are you kidding? Tolono was the  
 first to go.

NEARY

I heard the police reporting  
 lights in Tolona.

POWER CO. (V.O.)

What are you, monitoring police  
 calls on a night like this. Everything's  
 down Neary. The whole network has fallen.

Click! Neary sees the trouble zone approaching ahead.

EXT. - TROUBLE AREA - BLACKED OUT FRINGES OF SUBURBS - NIGHT

A yellow DWP cherry picker and other support vehicles are parked off the road surrounding a crippled power pole. A line of poles stretch beyond it to a rural infinity. An eerie ground fog makes the area even more remote. About fifteen linemen and grunt novices stare at Neary critically. After all he's not seniority around here. Another face, black and friendly, Jackson, approaches Neary smiling like it's nice out. x

NEARY

Hi Earl.

JACKSON

I found evidence of vandalism between lines M-10 through M-12.

Jackson looks up. The linemen look up. Finally Neary looks up and --

NEARY'S POINT OF VIEW

There are no lines M-10 to M-12. Just bare poles against a splash of stars. Neary and Jackson walk back toward Neary's van to make a report.

NEARY

Christ, Roy...why would somebody steal two miles of transmission line? x

JACKSON

It's the high price of copper. Stuff's worth a fortune. I told 'em we oughta lay power cable underground. x

NEARY

Where would the birds land? x

Neary goes to his car. The radio flashes a police call before he can report to Ike.

POLICE DISPATCH (V.O.)

To any unit in the vicinity of the Tolono foothills...a housewife reports ...uhh...her Tiffany lamp flashing in the kitchen window...up-side-down lamp...

JACKSON

Where'd he say? Tolono?

16 (Cont'd)

16 (Cont'd)

POLICE DISPATCH (V.O.)  
 Can't make it out clearly. Very  
 distraught...4155 Osborne Road.

x  
 x

NEARY  
 I thought everything was down.

x  
 x

Neary picks up the microphone.

NEARY (Cont'd)  
 TR-eighty-eight eighteen.  
 Let me talk to Ike!  
 (handing Jackson map)  
 Find Osborne, will you? I  
 never could read those things!

IKE (V.O.)  
 Neary! What's happening.

x

NEARY  
 (figuring it out, cockeyed)  
 Well. I'm here at Mary-ten. And--  
 all the lines have been swiped.  
 It looks like vandals made a very  
 sloppy cut at the terminals, then  
 backed in a truck and pulled out  
 all the grounds, but here's something  
 else--

x

IKE (V.O.)  
 Here's something for you. We've got  
 to pick up the system in one hour.

NEARY  
 One hour! It's a mile of empty poles  
 out here. That's impossible.

x

x

IKE (V.O.)  
 Anything's possible when you've got  
 a general supervisor stuck in an elevator  
 who wants to get out.

NEARY  
 (slight laugh - is Ike joking)  
 Say Ike? You haven't restored power  
 to Tolono have you?

x  
 x

x  
 x

IKE (V.O.)  
 You were told. Tolono was the first to go.

x

x

16 (Cont'd)

16 (Cont'd)

NEARY

x

(saying it carefully)

x

The police are reporting lights in Tolono. If the lines out there are energized and it's not showing up on your data bank one of our people working high around those terminals--ga-zzap! It happened in Gilroy once--remember.

x

x

IKE (V.O.)

Me and two backup computers say Tolono is as black as the inside of that elevator shaft.

POLICE DISPATCH AGAIN (V.O.)

See the complaintants at Tolono South Reservoir. Christmas lights have started a minor brushfire.

NEARY

Did you hear that? Did you hear that? They're saying Christmas lights now.

IKE (V.O.)

x

This is May, not December. There is no Christmas during a blackout. Only Halloween.

x

Ike hangs up as enticing police call replace Ike's thick voice. Roy stares at the police radio making his mind up.

NEARY

What's wrong with that guy. This is how Jordie Christopher bought it replacing shot out insulators in Gilroy.

x

(he thinks a beat longer,

hums his 'gearing up for action'

x

x

tune, then turns conspiratorially to Jackson)

x

How'd you like to sign on this operation for about an hour?

Neary is already closing the door and starting his vehicle.

16 (Cont'd)

16 (Cont'd)

JACKSON

(in a panic)

Me? Run this show? Who's gonna  
listen to me. I'm not even seniority.  
I'm not even white. Don't turn your  
back on a good thing, Roy. They made  
you boss cow.

NEARY

If he's wrong some of our Tolono  
people could get killed.

JACKSON

If he's right they'll suspend your  
ass so high even the job replacement  
corps won't find it.

NEARY

Tolono is what? Sixty-six to alternate  
seventy?

x Neary drives away. Jackson holding his head in agony over Neary's  
x sense of direction. x

JACKSON

(yelling after him)

You gonna wind up in Cincinnati.  
It's 70 to 66. x

Neary waves. He understands.

By this time fifteen tough looking linemen have surrounded Jackson  
wondering what in the world! Jackson turns to face these veterans  
waiting to be told what to do. He screws up his courage and points  
a long finger at the naked power poles.

JACKSON

Fix it.

x A16

A16 x

EXTERIOR - COUNTRY FIELDS - NIGHT

JILLIAN runs in vain calling Barry's name, choking back tears amidst  
sudden spurts of anger. She appears so small, outnumbered by billions  
of stars on this clear-air night.

EXT. DIP IN THE HIGHWAY- NIGHT

17

An eerie light just beneath the dip in the road throws amber shafts through an underbelly of fog. The light intensifies before a pair of headlights explode over the ridge and pull to a stop. Neary looks like he's drowning in maps. He pulls down a jerry-rigged roll map and sticks the penlight in his mouth...backwards. His cheeks glow pink and for a moment he can't figure why no light is getting to his map.

POLICE RADIO (V.O.)

U-five. Officer Longly over.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Go'ed.

LONGLY'S VOICE (V.O.)

Responding to that 10-75 on  
Cornbread Road and Middletown Pike.  
I am observing--I think it's street-  
lights in the foothill residential.  
We're on our way.

A bright group of highbeams appears over Neary's shoulder out the back window. Neary is tearing at maps and absently waves an arm out the side window. The automobile headlights pass him and somebody yells:

PASSENGER

You're in the middle of the road  
jerkwater!

OFFICER LONGLY (V.O.)

Couple hundred neighbors in their  
pajamas think its Saturday night out  
here.

18

INSERT- MAP

18

Neary's fingers tracing the route.

NEARY

Cornbread Road. Middletown Pike.  
D-five. M-34.

His two fingers meet and he takes off, tires screeching.

15B

19 EXT. DRIVE-IN ROW - NIGHT

Kids, cars, and Colonel Sanders. The blackout provides the best  
excuse for crowding the area eateries. Immediately upon seeing  
a Power Company truck the neighbors surround Neary talking at  
him through the windows with flashlights and Budweiser. An  
excited frenzy of suburbanites having a great time.

NEARY

(to neighbors)

Did your lights come back on?

NEIGHBOR LADY

You're asking us? What do you do  
for a living?

NEARY

What about the streetlights. When  
they went off did they come on? On  
off, on off.

A youngster sticks a flashlight in his face.

YOUNGSTER

Like this?

x He-blasts Neary in the face twice----on off, on off. x

NEARY

(blinking and sneezing)

Yes.

YOUNGSTER

No.

NEARY

Am I in Tolono or where?

LONGLY'S RADIO VOICE

It's all lit up out here. These streetlamps,  
I think sodium vapor, don't want to stay still.  
They're revolving in some draft. They go  
up... they go down..wait one...they also  
want to go a little sideways.



19 cont

NEARY

19 cont

Jesus!

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Longly, give us a location.

NEARY

(to radio)

Give me one too!

LONGLY'S VOICE (V.O.)

It's over the Ingleside Elementary  
School heading northeast.

NEARY

(to neighbors)

Where's the Ingleside Elementary  
School - anybody!

NEIGHBOR WITH SHOTGUN

That's easy..you go back to 70 then...

LONGLY'S VOICE (V.O.)

No wait a sec...heading Northwest on  
Daytona.

NEARY

Where's Daytona - quick!

NEIGHBOR

That's even easier. Take any road east  
out of here till you get to city-nine and  
farm-eleven but don't stop there 'cause  
you gotta find the Muncie four-way near  
the little pink Episcopalian church but  
don't stop there...

20 OMITTED

21 OMITTED

22 OMITTED

23 OMITTED

24 OMITTED

25 OMITTED

26 OMITTED

26

27 FARM COUNTY HIGHWAY - THIN GROUND FOG - NEARY

27

He turns into a rutted road, shines his spotlight on the street sign. He checks his map. It confuses him. Neary backs onto the main highway and stops, pulling the map closer, twisting the gooseneck tensor lamp close enough to burn a hole.

A bank of lights from an approaching vehicle can be seen from the rear window. They draw up very close and stop. Neary is only slightly annoyed by the glare from the rear and side view mirrors as he pours over the wrinkled map. He absently sticks out his left hand and begins to signal, "go around".

For a moment, nothing happens, then, soundlessly, the super highbeams comply...rising vertically out of sight leaving darkness behind.

Neary hasn't seen this. Then there is this noise. It is like the rattling of tin. Neary looks around. He shines his spotlight on the road sign.

28 ANGLE - ROAD SIGN

28

It is vibrating so fast that the letters seem to multiply and super-impose. He looks again with an almost comical, "Huuuh?". On that note, his spotlight, intensor light, and headlights glow a faint amber then black. CLICK! The entire area for thirty yards around his car is bathed in the brightest light imaginable. Neary tries to look out the open side window but it hurts, his eyes cannot adjust. He ducks back in and goes for his radio. It is dead. Neary is too scared to budge. Just his eyes move. Nothing more. Falling open at the hinges, the glove compartment rattles as everything metallic begins sticking together. A box of paperclips comes undone and dozens fasten themselves to the roof of the car. The ashtray empties itself out as though sucked weightless by a current of air from outside - and CLICK! The hotlight is gone. Paperclips rain down on him from the rooftop. The sign is no longer shaking. A DISTANT RATTLING causes Neary to swing around in his seat. His highbeams, spotlight, lamp, etc. come back to life. Down the road there is a FOUR-WAY STOP. The signs are dancing to and fro, vibrating so violently that the metal around the edges curls against the force. CLICK! The intersection a hundred yards down the road is awash in the same intense light. But only for a second. CLICK! And in the dark, the signs are no longer moving. All is still. Not even a hint of a breeze. Click!! His car lights and radio blast back and Neary screams.

29 FOUR-WAY STOP - NIGHT

29

The radio is making noises that sound like overload excitement.

29 (Cont'd)

29 (Cont'd)

## RADIO VOICE

I don't know, I'm asking you. Is there a full moon this morning?

## DISPATCH VOICE

That's a negative. New moon on the thirteenth...

## RADIO VOICE

Get out of here, me and my partner are seeing this thing over Signal Hill. This is the thing everybody is screaming about. It's the moon...

(static pause)

Wait a sec. Okay. It's starting to move now. West to East.

## UNIT 1011 VOICE

This is Tolono Police 1011. We are watching it, confirming it is definitely the moon. Be advised it is not moving. The clouds behind it are moving, giving it the illusion of movement over...

## RADIO VOICE

Where'd you study astronomy, Tolono? When did you ever see clouds moving behind the moon?

## DISPATCH VOICE

What's your location?

## LONGLY'S VOICE

Just off the Telemark Expressway and East toward Harper Valley.

## NEARY

Oh my God. I know where that is!

CLOSE - NEARY'S TIRES

They dig out two troughs of red Indian earth.

30 OMITTED

31 OMITTED

32 x INTERIOR - TUNNEL - NIGHT

32 x

ZOOOM -! There goes Neary at ninety-plus. High headlights illuminate the otherwise blackened tunnel making his car seem faster than it's actually going.

INTERIOR - NEARY'S VEHICLE

Excitement rivets his eyes on the road as the overlapping talk reaches a highpoint on the police radio.

## DEWITT'S VOICE

(strained and incredulous)

I see 'em Charlie! I'm in pursuit.

## PREWITT'S VOICE

You can take it for what it's worth. These things were not manufactured in Detroit.

## LONGLY'S VOICE

It's followin' all the S-turns. It's followin' all the roads.

## PREWITT'S VOICE

Yep...They's goin' right out east on Harper Valley.

33 CLOSE - EXPRESSWAY SIGN AT END OF TUNNEL

33

x East Harper Valley Exit - 3 Miles x

EXTERIOR - EAST HARPER VALLEY EXIT

x ZOOOOM -! Neary trades paint with the guardrail before yawing  
x a hard to starboard turn. Sparks shoot out into the night.  
x His front bumper catches a roadsign that spins to camera revealing  
x Harper Valley Exit - two miles. x

34 EXTERIOR - CRESCENDO SUMMIT - NIGHT

34

Little Barry appears under some snow fence at the side of a summit road that overlooks twenty miles of clear Indiana countryside. He has been running but stops near a blind curve and seems to lose his purpose and direction. He wanders aimlessly into the center of the two-lane country road. Above him, on a higher elevation, sits a toothless DAIRY FARMER in an aluminum folding chair. Below him is his family and a flatbed truck. A fat teenaged boy in bib-overalls stares through binoculars at the stardust overhead. Two five-year old girls lie on a mattress in the flatbed.

HEAR THE VOICE of Jillian Guiler yelling her son's name.

ANGLE - SIDE OF ROAD

Jillian bursts through the tall grass. She is disheveled and awash in tears and sweat. Her eyes go to Barry as Barry turns toward her. They both light up from headlights coming around the corner.

CLOSE - NEARY - INSIDE HIS CAR

35

He sees something in the road just ahead of him. He slams on the brakes.

36 CLOSE - JILLIAN

36

She screams and dives for her son.

37 CLOSE - NEARY

37

Whips the wheel to one side.

The car misses Barry and Jillian by inches and plows into the snow fence directly beneath the old farmer. Everything gets very still.

38 ANGLE - DAIRY FARMER

38

DAIRY FARMER

(slurping from a  
jug)

That's a dangerous curve. Saw a damn cow  
come by here one hour ago twenty  
feet off the ground. I've seen things  
since way back in 1927.

(takes a swig)

I couldn't tell you about 'em now.

Suddenly, Barry gets up LAUGHING. He tries to run forward down the road, his arms outstretched. Jillian stops him as Neary looks toward the farmer and observes this sweet 'Bradbury' setting through spinning eyes. Suddenly a breeze comes up and everybody's hair is swept behind them. All looks go downwind toward the magnificent valley vista.

BARRY

(calling off down  
the road)

Play here ....

CLOSE - NEARY

Turning also to look downwind and .. a dozen jackrabbits and several birds escape in a flurry past Neary as ... THREE CONE SHAPED ORANGE FLARES, 15 FEET ACROSS, TWO FEET ABOVE THE HIGHWAY .. SPEEDING SOUNDLESSLY. THEY BEGIN TO SEPERATE AS THEY NEAR JILLIAN, NEARY AND BARRY WHO FREEZE IN THE CENTER OF THE ROAD. THEY PASS RIGHT AROUND THEM AND AWKWARDLY REGROUP, RECEDING INTO THE DISTANCE.

BARRY

(jubilant)

ICE CREAM - !

Casually and full of pride, the old Dairy Farmer nods his head and clicks his tongue.

DAIRY FARMER

They can fly rings around the moon, but we're years ahead of 'em on the highway.

A tiny straggler objects speeds erratically after its buddies. This is too much! Jillian and Neary lock eyes, there is nothing they can say. Suddenly, Neary jerks around and grabs Jillian and Barry, pulling them off the road ... and in the nick of time.

ZOOOOM - ! ZOOOOM!

TWO INDIANA POLICE UNITS that Neary was monitoring break wind as fast as the turn will allow. Neary heads for his car.

DAIRY FARMER

Stick around ... You shoul'da seen it an hour ago!

NEARY

This is nuts!

A THIRD INDIANA CRUISER passes. Neary runs to his car and U-turns after them. The Old Farmer shouts to be heard.

DAIRY FARMER

I may be drunk but I know I'm here.

EXTERIOR - OHIO TOLL STATION - NIGHT

39

Eleven cozy toll booths bathed in ultra-modern fluorescent. An elderly watchman sits comfortably in the lane three kiosk buried in a Reader's Digest. The second hand on the wall clock ticks through 2:15 A.M. and stops on a fraction. What occurs next sends the watchman to his toes, his head spinning.

ELEVEN RED VIOLATION LIGHTS ACCOMPANIED BY A CLANGSTON ALARM IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A VEHICLE TRIES TO SNEAK THROUGH WITHOUT PUTTING THE QUARTER IN THE WIRE BASKET.

Goggle-eyed, the watchman spins around looking for numerous gate crashers. There is nobody around for miles - saving ...

#### WIDE ANGLE

Prewitt & Longly's police cruisers seize up their radials and stop short of Ohio. Dewitt's green police unit never even slows. It blurs Prewitt's vision and slices through Toll Gate #3.

#### LONGLY'S P.O.V.

Up ahead in rural Ohio, the road takes a hairpin right. But this time the tangerine lights ignore the turn and continue straight ahead. Locked in on this, Dewitt similarly ignores the turn and flies through the guard rail and into Ohio air space. An O.S. \$5,000 crash is HEARD.

#### REVERSE ANGLE

Neary pulls up and jumps out of his car. Prewitt and Longly are right behind and we see them CLOSE UP for the first time - - The six orange point sources appear into some low ceiling mist. The sky turns yellow-orange.

#### CLOSE - NEARY

He's hooked.

23-25B

DELETE PAGES 23 THROUGH 25B: SCENE 40



EXTERIOR - TARMAC - NIGHT

41 A pair of blinding landing lights seem to hover just before touching down. 41

42 INTERIOR - THE FOURTH CAR - NIGHT 42

A tight squadron of four vehicles wait in the dark with their engines rumbling. A young man, DAVID LAUGHLIN, sits in the back seat with his knees pinched together. Beads of sweat dot his brow. An older man sitting next to him nods toward the window.

OLDER MAN

Here he comes.

A fifth car, a Cadillac Limousine, is speeding toward the other four. David Laughlin tries to calm himself. He draws a gallon of air.

DAVID

I heard a rumor that he's gone through five interpreters in nine months.

OLDER MAN

It's no rumor. Good luck.

43 INTERIOR - THE APPROACHING BLACK LIMO - NIGHT 43

In the backseat is MR. LACOMBE, an austere, controlled Frenchman, but with an old fashioned, almost romantic way of handling himself. (Although we come to see Lacombe is constantly surrounded by space-age technology, he lights his cigarettes with matches instead of lighters, at one point he watch may stop ... one of the last men alive without a self-winding watch). In the front seat is another man, ROBERT.

44 WIDER ANGLE 44

Lacombe's car joins the others. David Laughlin jumps out of his car and rushes to Lacombe's. David's got hustle.

INTERIOR - LACOMBE'S CAR - BACK SEAT - NIGHT

45

David joins Lacombe in the back seat. Their DIALOGUE IS IN FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUB-TITLES.

DAVID

Mister Lacombe?  
(Lacombe nods)  
I'm your translator.

CONTINUED

LACOMBE

You are...

(searching his pockets;  
finding a scrap of paper  
and trying to pronounce  
what he reads in phonetic  
English)

Mees-ster-Lay-oog-line?

DAVID

Laughlin.

LACOMBE

(shrugs, almost bitter  
at his lack of English  
and pulls out a paperback  
book)

And you are on the project...two years.

DAVID

At the Wright-Patterson Facility,  
Dayton, Ohio.

(he adds enthusiastically)

I had the privilege of working for  
your executive assistant in seventy-one.  
Transcribed twenty-one hours of sleep-  
tape and attended the Montsoreau talks  
the week the French broke through.  
Congratulations, by the way.

x

LACOMBE

Thank you. Translate please.

Lacombe begins reading the book in French, something obviously quite  
passionate. He varies his inflections and emotions to a great degree.  
As Lacombe speaks, David translates one syllable or so behind him.

As David translates we see the Air East 31, a 727, roar to a trundle and  
veer onto a connection where a mini brute airport vehicle with flashing  
lights guides it to a halt near a dead end section of runway.

DAVID

(translating into English)

"Her firm young breasts heaved with  
excitement as she slipped off her  
wooly sweater..."

(he looks to Lacombe, who  
stares sternly ahead)

Her nipples were as hard, pink, and round  
as bubblegum. She squealed with  
excitement as her teacher slowly pulled out  
a long, stiff ruler...

CONTINUED

By now David is sweating profusely and has to SHOUT to be heard over the DEAFENING NOISE of the jet landing. Lacombe puts an end to Laughlin's misery by putting the book away.

LACOMBE

Fine...fine..

DAVID

(relieved)

If I may ask, sir...why that particular book?

x  
x

x  
x

Lacombe shrugs again and shows the front of a French paperback with a lurid cover and the title, in French, "The Cloak Room".

LACOMBE

Something I buy. I am sure it have emotional value. Emotions are going to be important, Laughlin. There is equivalents...emotional and linguistic in every language. I expect these words equivalents. I want to be understood perfectly.

x  
x  
x  
x

x  
x  
x  
x

(to Robert)

Robert, how was he?

ROBERT

(approvingly)

Hot damn!

Lacombe looks confused, doesn't understand this. David jumps in, supplying the translation for "hot damn" in idiomatic French. Lacombe smiles, gets out of the car and crosses toward the 727. Laughlin follows.

The wilted passengers watch bleary-eyed as the ramp extends to become metal stairs. The stewardess opens the forward door and six burly men rise into the galley area. Two of the men, officiously dressed, disappear into the pilot's cabin while the other four remain at "parade rest". They are all dressed as business executives, but something makes you wish you could see their shoulder holsters.

PILOT'S CABIN DOOR - AIREAST 31

47 x

The pilot, co-pilot, radio man and flight engineer are leaving the cockpit under escort, hurrying down the ramp to the waiting cars. The four business executives hurry to replace the crew and close the cockpit door behind them.

48 INTERIOR - PLANE

48

A public relations man and a couple of other officious looking men are at the front of the plane. They are carrying compact little stacks of IBM cards and bound clumps of test pencils. A public relations man assumes an almost laid back posture as he speaks to the passengers through the Public Address.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS MAN

Folks, I apologize on behalf of the Air Force Research and Development Command for the delay in your flight schedule. On your slow descent through 30,000 feet, you flew through a restricted corridor where classified government testing was being conducted. I'm going to ask all passengers with cameras, exposed film canisters, boxes of unexposed film and tape recording devices to turn them over to me at this time.

(the passengers explode in protest but Public Relations overrides them)

In return for which you may fill out a small card with your name and address. Your slides and prints will be developed and returned to you within the next two weeks at our expense.

49 ANGLE - OUTSIDE AIR EAST 31 - LACOMBE'S LIMO - NIGHT

49

The Air East flight crew is already seated inside as Lacombe intones something in French to David. David turns to an FAA official and three of his aides.

## DAVID

We want the flight recorder and don't wash the plane.

David ducks inside and the limousine speeds away down the tarmac.

CUT TO:

50 INTERIOR - MUNCIE POLICE DEPARTMENT 3:30 AM

50

This is the processing room. A blizzard of mid-morning activity complimented by secretaries and uniformed policemen checking in, checking out, writing reports. And leaning into their night reports are Officers Longly and Prewitt, the team that first pursued the nocturnal phenomenon to the Ohio border. This is probably the first time these men have ever enjoyed this kind of paper work. There is still a total blackout. Lightning thunder rattles the window, but there is no rain. Everyone works by candlelight, Coleman light, flashlights and police vehicle headlights directed through the station window.

ANGLE - NEARY

Without the aid of a typewriter, Neary is penciling in his story. He still pumps from excitement. Touching his head, Neary pauses and presses back a gnawing headache.

NEARY

Got any aspirin?

PREWITT

If Longly hadn't been with me I would have gone psychiatric.

LONGLY

I don't want to file this report.

(significant pause)

I want to publish it.

Just about now, a door bursts open across the processing room DEWITT emerges from the Captain's office, his arm in a sling and a bandaid on his forehead. The Captain has a pox on this early morning.

CAPTAIN

It's enough to outrage common sense.  
(to the room)

Ordinary people look to the police department not to make bizarre reports of this nature.

DEWITT

(in his own defense)

My knowledge is God's truth.

CAPTAIN

I will not see this department pressed between the pages of the National Enquirer.

The flustered commander turns his looks on Prewitt & Longly behind their typewriters.

50 cont

CAPTAIN

50cont

(loud to his secretary)

When Flash Gordon & Buck Rogers are  
done, have them get their behinds  
in here.

All the lights come on at this point. The blackout has ended. The fluorescent lighting is murder on Neary's vision. Dewitt is vanquished. Shaking his head he makes for the door. The two officers snag a piece of him and Dewitt stops to look down, dazed.

LONGLY

PREWITT

x

What'd you do to the old man?

What happened?

x

DEWITT

x

(dazed)

x

x

He read my report. I drew a  
suspension.

x

x

x

EXIT DEWITT. Prewitt and Longly trade nervous looks. And if fingers could tip-toe, that's what happens next. So much for God's truth! Out from their typewriters go the I.F. 102 file reports - in go fresh ones. Prewitt and Longly pound the keyboard like Ferrante & Teicher.

CLOSE - NEARY

Feeling betrayed. He squints down at his pile of pencil markings and sketches. Looks at the Captain's closed door. Looks at his digital wristwatch which shows 3:30 AM and with renewed enthusiasm runs out of the MUNCIE P.D.

51

INTERIOR - NEARY BEDROOM - NIGHT

51

It's about 4:00 AM. Ronnie is asleep. Neary bursts into the room, goes to bed and shakes her. He turns on the lights in the room.

NEARY

Honey, wake up!

RONNIE

Hhhhh....

NEARY

You're not going to believe what's happening.

RONNIE

(fighting back to sleep)

I'm not listening...

NEARY

(shaking her)

You don't have to listen. There was  
nothing but air and all of a sudden...WOOSH...  
then WOOSH...Then a little WOOSH...Jesus!

RONNIE

(rubbing her eyes)

The Department's been trying to reach you. They couldn't reach you....

NEARY

Yeah, I know. It shut my radio off.

RONNIE

(waking up)

Roy, you shouldn't do that. They have to talk to you ... all kinds of crazy things are going on. The phone has been ringing off the hook. They want you to call them now!

x  
x  
x

Neary sees he can't transmit his feelings with words so he begins to pull Ronnie out of bed.

NEARY

Come on! Get outta bed ...

RONNIE

Roy. What's wrong?

x

NEARY

Nothing. You have to see something with me.

x

RONNIE

Is it an accident?

x  
x

NEARY

You wanted to get out of the house, didn't you?

x  
x  
x

RONNIE

Not at 4:00 A.M.

NEARY

Don't argue ... just come on

RONNIE

We can't leave the kids.

NEARY

Leave the kids? I wouldn't leave the kids.

52 INTERIOR - HALLWAY / INTERIOR CHILDRENS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Neary runs out of the Master Bedroom and into the hallway.

NEARY

(shouting)

BRAD. TOBY. SYLVIA!

53 INTERIOR NEARY KITCHEN - OUT TO EXTERIOR NEARY DRIVEWAY

Neary is rushing his hastily assembled family to the family car. They are in various states of undress. Neary has his cameras, binoculars, Brad's telescope ... anything he can get his hands on that has a lense.



53 (Cont'd)

TOBY

53 (Cont'd)

(muttering sleepily)  
You stole my luminous paints ...

NEARY

You'll get your luminous paint! Everything's  
going to be luminous!

x On the run, Ronnie stops to open the refrigerator to grab her  
raw vegetable pouch. The refrigerator light is an un-appetizing green. x

TOBY

That green light makes me barf.

RONNIE

I'll change it after I lose another three  
pounds.

BRAD

Are we going to a drive-in?

NEARY

Uh, uh. We're going to do something much  
more fun.

But Neary continues hustling them out of the house and toward the  
Chevy wagon around the back of the driveway.

ANGLE - MRS. HARRIS' HOME - NEXT DOOR - NIGHT

There is a noise below her bedroom window. She peaks out the window and  
down to see what all the fuss is about.

RONNIE

Roy, you've proved your point. We're out  
of the house. Now can we go back to sleep?

Neary opens the passenger door to the car, shoving the children in.  
Ronnie resists one last time.

RONNIE

This is only funny if it ends here in the  
driveway.

TOBY

You promised Goofy Golf.

x Finally, all are in the car, kids in the back, Roy and Ronnie in the  
front. As the light goes on inside the car, Ronnie notices something  
odd. Roy is red on one half of his face. x

RONNIE

Roy ... you're sunburned.

NEARY

Yeah. I took my vacation while you were  
asleep.

33-A

3 (Cont'd)

53 (Cont'd)

RONNIE

Only half!

x

x

Neary looks quickly into the rear view mirror as he drives off. He does look a little red in the face. He shrugs it off and continues down the dark street.

CUT TO:

54 EXTERIOR - CRESCENDO SUMMIT - NIGHT

54

The Neary car is parked alone at the summit. The farmer has departed, leaving debris. The kids are sleeping uneasily in the back seat and Ronnie is dozing in the front as Roy paces back and forth outside the car. He's been waiting a long time for something to happen and he's pissed off at the heavens.

54 (Cont'd)

54 (Cont'd)

Ronnie opens her eyes and sees Roy's distress.

RONNIE

Why won't you tell me what you're waiting for?

NEARY

You'll know when you see it.

RONNIE

Come on. I came here with you. I'm taking this very well. Now tell me. What did it look like?

NEARY

Kind of like ... like an ice cream cone.

RONNIE

(innocently)

What flavor?

NEARY

(taking her seriously)

Orange. It was orange ... and it wasn't really like an ice cream cone ... it was sort of in a shell ... this way ...

RONNIE

Like a taco?

NEARY

No, rounder, larger ... and sometimes ... it was like ... like ... you know those rolls we had yesterday?

RONNIE

Bran muffins?

NEARY

No! Not for breakfast ... for dinner. What were those rolls? Those curvy ones?

RONNIE

You mean the Crescent rolls?

NEARY

Yeah! And it gave off a kind of neon glow.

54 (Cont'd)

54 (Cont'd)

Ronnie begins to eat vegetables from the plastic pouch. Neary walks a few paces away from her chewing, hunching near a rock. Ronnie watches him anxiously. Maybe she is too bitchy. She gets out of the car and crosses toward him.

x  
x

RONNIE

(again)

Don't you think I'm taking this really well?

ANGLE ON NEARY

Ronnie comes up and moves next to him. She stays there silently for a beat, looking at him while he looks at the sky, ignoring her. She looks up to the sky and gives a little shudder.

RONNIE

(a shorthand that started

Snuggle. when they met eleven years ago)

x  
x  
x

Roy dutifully does this. She begins to snuggle and play with his ear.

RONNIE

I remember when we use to come to places like this to look at each other.

Neary looks at her, remembers some good times and smiles. She smiles back and kisses him. He accepts the kiss, improves on it and pretty soon they're necking. But Roy is not so engrossed in his passion that he doesn't open his eyes to watch the skies. Suddenly, everything lights up and a blue hot whoosh tears at their clothes. Roy almost leaves his skin as red tail lights diminish in the distance. Ronnie knows it was only a semi-truck-trailer and isn't bothered.

x

x

RONNIE

If one of those things came down here right now and the door opened, would you get on it?

NEARY

(thrilled at the idea)

Jesus Christ, yes !!!

(seeing this has hurt her)

Well, anyone would!

x  
xx  
x

Ronnie considers this. She gets up, dusts herself off, and goes back to the car, stopping suddenly turning and letting Roy have it out of both barrels.

RONNIE

x  
x  
x  
x  
x  
x  
x

You know what you've done to us? You know what this means?! You've brought us out here twenty miles from home in the middle of the night - and you have destroyed our sleep cycle. Your sons are gonna konk out in the middle of a school day and Sylvia will be up until one a.m. for the next three nights because their father swears he saw a flat orange Betty Crocker crescent roll that flies. We might as well have breakfast right now.

x  
x  
x  
x  
x  
x  
x

x  
x

x  
x

(lowers her voice and levels her aim)

Don't ever try anything like this again. We're your family. It is not normal.

Ronnie jumps in the car and slams the door. Roy looks up at the sky. And mouths a big obscenity.

INT - NEARY MASTER BATHROOM/HALLWAY - DAY

55 x

Neary has his head stuck in the sink as he brushes his teeth. Through the mirror Brad, Toby and three neighborhood kids are seen sneaking up.

ANGLE - KIDS

Brad has a polaroid camera. He adjusts the focus then nods to Toby. Toby is hesitant but tiptoes up to his father and gets a bright idea of how to get him to turn around. He pulls the elastic back on Neary's underwear and lets it fly. Snap.

CLOSE - NEARY

He's hip to this all along but wheels and screams, monster like, toothpaste dripping down his chops, half his face as red as a lobster. The boys are so startled they run away shrieking.

ANGLE - HALLWAY

Running down the hall. Brad rips out the exposed picture as Ronnie moves toward them from the kitchen.

TOBY

(to friends)

Did you see his face? Did  
the picture come out?

NEIGHBOR KID

He looks like a fifty-fifty bar.

Ronnie intercepts the photograph halfway through its development.

RONNIE

This isn't your camera to play with  
everytime I turn around.

A55

INTERIOR - MASTER BATHROOM

A55

Some of the pleasure of scaring the kids lingers on as he takes a can of Rapid Shave and nozzles a mound of white lather into the palm of his right hand. He perfunctorily lifts the mountain of cream toward his face when something stops him. Neary begins to stare vaguely at the stuff in his hand. He cocks his head, brings it eye-level close and curiously begins to shape some of it with the middle finger on his left hand when Ronnie suddenly appears at the door, her mind all made up.

NEARY

(holding up pile of cream)

Ronnie! What does this remind you of? x

RONNIE

We're going to tell people you fell  
asleep under a sunlamp on your right side.

NEARY

What for?

Brad has wandered back in with Toby close behind.

BRAD

Dad, are they for real?

RONNIE

That's what for.

(to Brad)

No, they're not for real and go have a hotdog outside. Go to the party.

NEARY

Don't tell him that.

RONNIE

Look! Don't you talk about this until you know what you're talking about.

NEARY

That's crazy, if I don't talk about this how am I gonna find out what's to know.

BRAD

Mom...I believe in them.

RONNIE

No you don't.

BRAD

Dad says so.

RONNIE

(pleading to Roy for help)

He does not! Roy?

NEARY

I just want to know what in the world is going on!

RONNIE

(so simply)

It's just one of those things.

CONTINUED

PAGE DELETED



NEARY

Which things?

RONNIE

I don't want to hear about this anymore.

NEARY

C'mon. I've got to call somebody. This is important.

TOBY

Do they live on the moon?

BRAD

They got bases on the moon so at night they can come in your window and pull the covers off!

RONNIE

(sing-song snid)

I'm not listening.

NEARY

I saw something last night I can't explain.

RONNIE

(eye contact)

I saw something last night I can't explain.

x  
x  
x  
x

She leaves the doorway. Neary yells to her as she goes into the boys room that resembles the epicenter of a major quake.

NEARY

You know I'm going out there again tonight damnit!

Ronnie turns on a dime and smiles ever so sweetly.

A55 (Cont'd)

A55 (Cont'd)

RONNIE  
(trying to keep it light)  
No you're not.

NEARY  
(like a little boy)  
Yes I am.

RONNIE  
No you're not.

The phone begins ringing off the hook.

NEARY  
Yes I am

Ronnie notices the mountain of foam Neary is holding so close to his face and smiles playfully.

RONNIE  
No you're not

And she pushes his palm into his face and runs off to answer the phone. Neary stands there like one of the Three Stooges and turns to the mirror to shave. He YELLS back over his shoulder.

NEARY  
It ain't a moonburn, goddamit....

In the mirror Ronnie is back all of a sudden. She looks like someone who has just been told she's terminally ill. Tears begin to come and she stands there shaking. Neary turns immediately thinking it's him.

NEARY  
Okay...I don't have to go.

Ronnie explodes into his arms, cheek to cheek with all the lather and tears and --

RONNIE  
You got fired. They wouldn't even talk to you. What are we going to do? You got fired. What's going on?

ANGLE

On Neary's stunned reaction.

PAGE DELETED

This is called a Sunday brunch block social. A hundred neighbors and their children share six unfenced backyards and a feast of hamburgers, potato salad, hot dogs, and ice cream. Everyone must bring a bowl of something and Ronnie is no exception with a saran-wrapped tray of stuffed tomatoes.

She sets them down on a picnic table and is immediately surrounded by gossip in the women's circle; ten housewives tired of being married to their houses. Ronnie is distracted as she notices Roy twenty yards away in the men's circle.

INTERCUT BETWEEN BOTH CIRCLES- RONNIE STUDYING ROY, TRYING TO READ HIS LIPS

GROUP ANGLE - MEN'S CIRCLE

Twelve men, different ages and backgrounds, but all neighbors of the same block. Neary's mind is not on the Sunday small talk (mostly improvised). DARRYL, between swallows, looks at Roy sort of puzzled.

DARRYL

(referring to Roy's burn)  
How'd you do that to yourself?

NEARY

(thinking a beat, then)  
Sunlamp.

GROUP ANGLE - WOMEN'S CIRCLE

Ronnie is so anxious that Roy is behaving himself she hasn't heard one word said at her.

BONNIE

It's Driver's Education for people who think operating a car in traffic is second nature to them by now. It emphasizes we should find new routes to travel routine places. We take the roads we travel on so much for granted that we are really functioning in an unconscious state behind the wheel. You know Ronnie with all the driving Roy does in his work you two should sign up for these classes.

RONNIE

(completely distracted)  
It was the sunlamp. He fell asleep on his right side. I don't know what I'm going to do with him.

GROUP ANGLE - MEN'S CIRCLE

BARNEY

I like this idea, not fencing in.  
But I'm telling you if one of us  
does it. Everybody's gonna start.

CLOSE - NEARY

He looks around. Then, with a cursory glance at first, his eyes go skyward.

CLOSE - RONNIE

She sees this with held breath.

ANGLE- NEARY

He looks up again. Lingers.

ANGLE - GROUP

The flow of the conversation doesn't waiver but a few of the neighbors look up to see what Neary is watching.

CLOSE - RONNIE

Almost talking to him under her breath...willing him to act naturally.. and at the same time pretending this isn't happening.

ANGLE- MEN'S CIRCLE

Everybody takes turns looking up at the sky, and by this time Neary hasn't found what he was looking for and half-heartedly returns to the conversation but, like a yawn in a crowd, the domino effect is nearing epidemic proportions. Everybody is looking up now, and the rubbernecking is spreading across four backyards to the women's circle. Ronnie is absolutely mortified.

CLOSE- ROY

Smiles at Ronnie across the way and kind of waves to her.

CLOSE - RONNIE

Her eyes spray him with resentment and embarrassment. She doesn't hide anything.

EXT. -MINIATURE GOLF GREEN- FIFTH HOLE

The Neary family has arrived at the fifth hole. Neary still isn't paying much attention as he looks upward. These looks are not lost on Ronnie and she is becoming increasingly tense.

BRAD

Come on, Dad. You're up.

SCENE 57 OMITTED

A 57 EXT. - COUNTRYSIDE OF INDIA - DAY

A 57

A TITLE APPEARS: BENARES VALLEY - INDIA

On a hillside outside Benares, ten thousand Hindu followers of the Sadhu kneel in prayer, bowing and chanting to the sky. They are all chanting the same five notes over and over...ten thousand strong. It is a haunting sound, melodic but ominous.

ANGLE- AGAINST THE THROG

Towering above the mass of worshippers move a half dozen caucasian technicians. They are laden down with recording equipment as they begin a clean sweep of the hillside, recording the chant with outstretched pole mikes.

ANGLE- FURTHER UP THE HILL

Lacombe and Laughlin stand with an ancient Brahman leader of these people. The Brahman's eyes are filled with tears of joy. He is babbling in Hindu. David translates.

DAVID

The sky sings to us!

Lacombe is filled with emotion. He embraces the old man.

LACOMBE

It sings to us too, my friend.

CUT TO:

58

INTERIOR - NEARY CAR - NIGHT

58

Beyond the tinted windshield is a breathtaking display of starlife on the clear and humid evening. Roy drives with purpose and direction as he nears his special destination and...

59

EXT. - CRESCENDO SUMMIT - NIGHT

59

Reaching the crest of the highway, the Ohio farmer's red pickup truck is a familiar sight. But he is not alone tonight. Others have congregated. A Dodge Motorhome, and I-H tractor and several Volkwagens are parked alongside the road, beset with a red-tag assortment of star gazers comfortably ensconced in aluminum patio chairs and occasionally peering at the horizon through field glasses as if waiting for some phantom parade to pass. Two kids have erected homemade reflecting telescopes and...



59 (Cont'd)

59 (Cont'd)

the farmer's oldest son is adjusting his 35mm Nikromat from the roof of the cab. As Neary opens the door of the car most of the people turn and eye him rather hostilely. He feels unwanted as he steps away from his vehicle. He spots the old farmer, a familiar face, and hurries over to him, taking and shaking his hand. The farmer is friendly and a little drunk.

NEARY

Hi. Remember me?

FARMER

No ... but there's lots of things I don't remember.

NEARY

I was here last night.  
 (looks around)  
 We got quite an audience.

FARMER

Beats television.

NEARY

Who are all these people?

FARMER

(pleased with himself)  
 This is the Society for the People  
 Interested in What's Going On Around  
 Here.

The Farmer wanders back to his jug and Neary is left alone under the stars. He feels very small and insignificant .. even though the evening is humid, he feels a chill. He looks over and sees the other people huddled in a group. He ambles over to six senior citizens seated around a card table on the greasy shoulder. Four of them are playing canasta. Eighty, if she's a year, GRACEY smiles up at Roy Neary

A SOUND makes everyone look toward the northern skies. Jet aircraft can be heard passing in the rarified distance.

ELDERLY MAN

We'll be up here all night if that  
 keeps up.

Roy kneels by the elderly lady who is the Queen of Needlepoint.

NEARY

(confidentially)  
 Are they coming over tonight?

Her whole face lights up as though he's told her the meaning of life. She becomes teary eyed.

(Cont'd)

GRACEY

59 (Cont'd)

Oh, I hope so. Don't you?

NEARY

(in all seriousness)

Yes.

GRACEY

(to her husband)

Can I show him the album?

He ignores her. So Gracey hefts a volume sized leatherette photo album and opens it to the first page.

GRACEY

I took these myself...out by the playground.

Neary eases close to see between the pages. Pressed beneath the protective plastic are six polaroid color snapshots. Each shows nothing more than a splash of overexposed yellow - or a slit of white - or an area out of focus blue. Simple photographic errors.

*Insert Close Encounter Speech*  
 Neary leaves Gracey with a pat on the shoulder and jogs to his car. He returns with his Instamatic and finds a fence post to lean against.

NEARY'S P.O.V.

As he sights through his camera he sees Jillian Guiler and Barry. Now, without the tension of the near accident last night, she has just arrived on the scene. Roy gets up and sheaths his camera; getting ready to cross over to her. But before he can, she spots him and goes directly to him. Barry tags along behind his mother for awhile but then sort of wanders off near a section of dirt to play.

ANGLE - JILLIAN AND ROY

JILLIAN

Hi. Remember me?

NEARY

How can I forget.

They shake hands.

JILLIAN

Jillian.

(Cont'd)

NEARY

Roy Neary. Last night was really weird.

59 (Cont'd)

JILLIAN

(agreeing)

It doesn't feel like it's over.

(suddenly noticing)

You're sunburned.

NEARY

Yeah, I'm hoping to tan the other side tonight.

JILLIAN

It got my whole face and neck.

She opens her blouse slightly to reveal her tan line and her neck. Roy is embarrassed at the sight of a pair of tits he's not married to. Jillian is obviously less uptight than Roy in most areas.

A genial man in a sports jacket shines a flashlight at Jillian and Roy. Their sunburns seem to stand out in his beam. He smiles and takes a flash picture before they can speak. He smiles again and moves on toward little Barry. Jillian skips over to where Barry is building a mound of dirt and blocks the flashlight beam.

JILLIAN

(angry to guy)

He's a little young to have a record.

The guy smiles and moves on. Roy is a little awed at Jillian's strength.

NEARY

Where do you think he's from?

JILLIAN

Earth.

She hunches down to wipe some dirt off Barry, turning soft and motherly.

JILLIAN

My dirty kid.

NEARY

He's cute under the dirt...I, uh, got three of my own at home.

(Cont'd)

59 (Cont'd)

He digs into his wallet and almost defensively shows off a family snapshot.

NEARY

I work for the power company. I'm not one of the regulars around here.

JILLIAN

(looking at the picture)  
Does your wife know what's going on?

NEARY

I've been breaking it to her easy.  
So far she understands "perfectly."

JILLIAN

(grins appreciatively)  
I know what you mean. I called my mother -- she said that's what I get for living alone.  
(embarrassed pause)  
Well, there's Barry and the neighbors and I'm not really alone at all.

They find themselves watching the child shape the dirt he's playing with into a tiny mountain. Neary hunches down and helps him with the dirt.

NEARY

(to Barry)  
You're working kind of late, tonight, kiddo.

JILLIAN

(bites her lip)  
I guess he should be home in bed, but I don't want to let him out of my sight.

Neary takes a twig and etches fluted sides into the dirt mound. Oddly enough, both the child and Jillian accept this as natural behavior.

NEARY

(admiring his work)  
Hey -- what does this remind you of?

Jillian searches for an answer -- it reminds her of something, but she doesn't know what. She leans over and gently scoops the top off, leaving a flattened butte.

(Cont'd)

JILLIAN

59 (Cont'd)

I like it better this way.

NEARY

(puzzled)

So do I.

At that moment their attention is diverted by a shout from the farmer's son.

FARMER'S SON

Here they come! Out of the Northwest!

A hush falls over the gathering. The two boys man their telescopes like anti-aircraft batteries. The farmboy double checks his shutter speed. Gracey holds her camera up and stands behind her chair.

ANGLE - DAIRY FARMER

He lifts up a hand painted cardboard sign that reads:  
STOP AND BE FRIENDLY.

JILLIAN

(pointing)

There!

WITHDRAW TO REVEAL

On the far distance here the black hills gather and the road melts away, two delicate pinpoints of light converge and grow relentlessly brighter as they make their low altitude approach. Neary and Jillian are determined to remain calm.

NEARY

What if we're just tow wackos standing  
on a hill with thirty other wackos!

JILLIAN

Your eyes burn, don't they?

NEARY

All day long.

JILLIAN

Me too.

NEARY

I was a little crazy this afternoon,  
waiting for it to get dark.

(Cont'd)

JILLIAN

59 (Cont'd)

Right! It's like Halloween for grown-ups.

NEARY

(addressing the lights)  
Trick or treat!

ANGLE - GRACEY

Tears are running down her cheeks. She genuflects, mutters a prayer and steadies her camera like a pro.

BEYOND ALL THIS THE WHITE LIGHTS ELONGATE AND FLARE LIKE A WELDERS TORCH.

MYSTERIOUS GENTLEMAN WITH CAMERA

He is beating a hasty retreat to his car and leaves the area.

CLOSE - NEARY

His entire body is trembling out of control. He aims his camera but it refuses to steady. This is as close to a religious experience as Roy has ever encountered.

JILLIAN

You're really trembling.

NEARY

(defensive)

It's chilly. We're out again in the middle of the night.

JILLIAN

It doesn't matter. So am I. Feel.

She tucks his hand against her neck. Roy removes his hand, but Jillian snuggles against him in mounting fear.

NEARY

If these things stop and open their doors -- would you get in and go?

JILLIAN

If these things stop -- I'm going home.

NEARY

(takes it all in and is suddenly sane)  
This is totally crazy.

(Cont'd)

59 (Cont'd)

THE ASSEMBLED

The people stir as an unusual quality of SOUND permeates the air. It is a rhythmical noiseblowing against the wind - louder now. Faster, and more frenzied than anyone expected, and fear shoots through all as they interpret the internal combustive pounding and ...the two blinding lights swallow everything up.

Air is displaced - the sky whites out - and the lights become two AIR FORCE HELICOPTERS that descend upon the gathering beating hot air on them, sucking dirt and featherweight debris up into the swirling convections as the screaming machines manuever around each other until the ultimate man made cyclone sends aluminum chairs, card tables, blankets and picnic leavings in a violent upheavel.

NEARY

What's happening!

ANGLE - BARRY AND JILLIAN

Filled with terror, the little boy takes off running -- away from the approaching lights. Jillian snags him before he's gone four steps.

JILLIAN

Barry!

CLOSE ENCOUNTER SPEECH

FARMER

(seeing Neary unimpressed)  
Yeah, those pictures ain't much.  
Close Encounters of the First Kind.

NEARY

(amused)  
First kind?

FARMER

That's right. Anything that ain't a mere point of light. Most everybody you come across up here has been through that. Now me -- I done better. I've had a Close Encounter of the Second Kind.

NEARY

Second kind -- right.

FARMER

That's when they swoop down and shine on you -- and you can feel the heat and the unearthly glow.

(pause)

Sometimes they sing the grass.

(pause)

~~'Course that ain't much neither.~~

In the background, Jillian gets out of a car with Barry. She spots Roy and heads for him.

FARMER

'Course that ain't much neither.

NEARY

There's more?

FARMER

You better believe it. What I'm waiting for is a Close Encounter of the Third Kind.  
(he looks at the sky and the stars and grins)  
That's when you meet 'em.

Jillian touches Roy on the arm.

JILLIAN

Hi. Remember me?

go on with the scene...

unseen by Neary,



59 cont

59 cont

ANGLE- GRACEY

Alone now and stranded beneath the pounding rotor wash, Gracey feebly attempts to gather her blown photo piece collection. She chases the snapshots back and forth, attempting to snatch them right out of the sky, missing and crying yet unmindfully determined. Neary, outraged by what's happening, runs a few steps to face Gracey. Someone else reaches her first and pulls her away to safety.

60 OMITTED

61

INTERIOR - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

61

Fifty conservatively dressed men and women are filing in. All of them display photo-identification on their black lapels. They are each handed what looks like fancy programs in silver leaf. The mood is less formal than the dress. In the front row a clique of twelve strong young men in Air Force blazers wait attentively. On the stage are seven high-ranking project leaders. Lacombe is one of them.

61 (Cont'd)

61 (Cont'd)

ANGLE ON STAGE

A man comes out on stage. He speaks with a Texas accent.

## TEXAS

We are indebted to the people of La Société des Lumières for their advanced research and initial success. I'd like to share the dais with Mr. Lacombe, a pioneer in the MAYFLOWER breakthrough. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Edmund Hillary of the hour, Claude Lacombe.

At this announcement the assemblage quickly, almost respectfully, take their seats. The lights dim and Lacombe comes out. He looks nervous and his English is shakey.

## LACOMBE

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.  
Parles vous Francais?

There is a kind of shameful mass of shrugs and "uh, uh's" from the crowd. Lacombe is pleased at his one-up-manship.

## LACOMBE (Continued)

Good, then you will excuse me if my English is no good, too.

(he gets some  
chuckles)

Very little needs be said. The music will say it all. We start on page one and read together to the end. Please....

(Cont'd)

61 (Cont'd)

Lacombe steps back and the curtains on the stage part. There, in a theatrical pool of light, a tape recorder sits alone on a metal chair. This draws some laughter from the audience. A nervous musician-technician who resembles William Shakespeare makes his entrance. He takes a seat next to the tape recorder and opens some sheet music.

ANGLE - AUDIENCE

They open their programs to reveal the same sheet music.

ANGLE - SHAKESPEARE

He switches the tape recorder to playback. HEARD is the Five-tone chant from that hillside in India.

SHAKESPEARE

...Slow it down.

The recorder plays back a single Indian voice at half speed intoning a slight variation of the five tones just heard. The audience is excited.

ANGLE ON LACOMBE - BACKSTAGE

Standing just out of sight, moving his lips slightly as if speaking with the music.

SHAKESPEARE(O.S.)

...Slow it down.

We HEAR the beginning of another five chord variation slower and more tunefully. A man walks up to Lacombe and delivers a sealed Telex to him, interrupting his reverie. He lifts his eyes from the sheet music, takes the message and opens it. He raises an eyebrow...it's obviously stunning news of some kind.

SHAKESPEARE(O.S.)

...Slow it down.

Now even slower and another haunting five tones.

ANGLE ON CROWD

SHAKESPEARE(O.S.)

...Slow it down. All the way.

(Cont'd)

61 (Cont'd)

The last five note lovely variation and the reaction is spontaneous. Everybody leaps up cheering and backslapping, like mission control when the Eagle landed on the moon. Utter pandemonium.

CUT TO:

62

EXT. JILLIAN'S HOUSE - DUSK

62

Jillian's house is in a remote place. She is out in her back yard emptying the trash. Amidst the day's debris are a few aborted sketches of mountains that Jill has made in charcoal and pastels. From INSIDE THE HOUSE WE HEAR the same five notes we have just heard in the auditorium, only now the notes are coming from a child's toy xylophone. Jillian smiles and looks toward the house.

63

HER P.O.V.

63

She has left the kitchen door open and has an unobstructed view through the kitchen and into the living room where Barry is banging away happily on his xylophone (the same five notes). He is giggling and laughing as he plays. All this is pleasant and reassuring to her as she continues trying to get everything in the cans for trash day. As she continues her chores she HEARS the xylophone music stop but Barry's laughter increases. The child's laughter reaches a peak of joy, disturbing Jill. (Too much joy for a mother to bear). She looks back into the house. Barry, laughing hysterically, runs to a side window and looks up at the sky. Jill is afraid to follow her son's gaze skyward but she does. She is astounded.

o4

ANGLE - SKY

64

A forbidding sky, lots of clouds moving over, hundreds of dream shaped puffs...and a lot of them are lit up from behind, flashing colors like heat lightning. Tiny geodesic points of light skip from cloud to cloud. We're not sure whether this is a natural or supernatural phenomenon occurring but whatever it is it's like nothing we've ever seen before. It scares the shit out of us and Jillian. A LOW RUMBLE, perhaps thunder, rolls over the landscape.

65

ANGLE - JILLIAN

65

She eyes the safety of her house, turns slowly, very slowly and begins the long fifteen steps back inside. She is terrified and she doesn't want to make herself more terrified by running. She continues toward the kitchen in controlled motion.

66

INT. HOUSE

66

She enters the kitchen; very slowly and deliberately locks the back door. She goes into the living room and begins pulling down blinds. As she moves throughout the house closing all the blinds her movements become faster and faster. She goes from a walk to a trot to a run, jerking blinds down as her sense of panic increases.

ANGLE - BARRY

He is still laughing and having a great time but he can't understand why his mother is closing the blinds on all the fun. He goes to a window and opens the blind. Jillian practically dives for him.

JILLIAN

Barry, no!

She rips him away from the window and yanks the shade down. Almost instantly brilliant orange lights appear behind the blinds. The intensity is staggering, even through the opaque blinds. She steps back, stifling a scream.

JILLIAN (Continued)

Not now! Not now!

Barry is still howling with laughter as Jill races to the phone book. With trembling hands she begins scrambling through the book, searching for the "N's"...searching for Neary. Before she can even find the number there is a rattling at the side door. She forgot to lock it! She dashes to the side door.

JILLIAN (Continued)

(through tears)

Not yet!

She bolts the side door as the noise reaches a crescendo outside. She is back in the living room just in time to see Barry open the front. There's a chain lock on the door so the door only opens a crack, but through that crack comes Orange light so intense it could set the furniture on fire. Jill slams the door from behind, grabs Barry and drags him back toward the phone. She is near hysteria and she begins ripping page from the phone book, searching for Neary's number. She HEARS scratching SOUNDS on the roof, terrible scraping noises. With dread she sees soot and ashes fall from the chimney onto the iron log holders. She renews her search for the number when suddenly the room GOES BLACK. She is totally enveloped in darkness for a moment when the TV suddenly goes ON. This is enough light for Jillian to zero in on Roy's number and dial it. Her skin is white, her eyes are aflame as she waits for the number to ring.

the kitchen appliances.

~~She is near hysterical when a voice from the other end answers. It's Ronnie.~~

CONTINUED

66cont

RONNIE (O.S.)

Hello.

JILLIAN

( a croak)

Roy...

RONNIE (O.S.)

He's not here. I'm his wife.

Who's calling please?

*She is very nervous when...*  
 Before Jillian's trembling-mouth can form a syllable, the lights go on again. Then they suddenly dim to a low red glow, then a burst of blue even more brilliant than the orange and quickly back to the dim red glow. This phantasmagora sends Jillian to her knees, dropping the phone and crawling under the desk shielding Barry with her body. Barry manages to wriggle away. x  
 Jill is almost epileptic with fear and its not over yet. The TV, stereo, various appliances and individual lamps take turns in various degrees of loudness and intensity.

As suddenly as it began, the cacophony of sounds and the lights STOP. The room is returned to normal. Whatever was there is gone and the room is so quiet Jill's labored breathing sounds almost too loud. She is a burnt out mass of nerve endings under the desk. The phone dangles uselessly and from it we HEAR - x  
 a-mechanical voice recording, "please hang up and dial again": CAMERA WITHDRAWING. Further and further across the kitchen. And Jillian realizes she no longer has Barry in her clutch. The room is empty.

ANGLE - FRONT DOOR

It is open. The night blows in. Barry is gone.

INT. NEARY CAR - DAY

Roy is driving somewhere in the Indiana countryside with a purpose. Ronnie, kind of dressed up, is with him. We come in mid-conversation.

RONNIE

Well, it was Cosmopolitan. The fact that these things came closer and closer represents your mother's breast with its promise of food. When satisfied, you the infant, lose interest in the breast which goes away, getting smaller and smaller. The shape of the female breast is...

CONTINUED

(Cont'd)

67 (Cont'd)

NEARY

Ronnie, I did not see my mother's tits coming in low over the Mt. Pleasant foothills!

This and the sight of the Air Base they're approaching makes Ronnie sink down in her seat.

RONNIE

Roy, I'll never forgive you if I run into anybody here I know.

68 EXTERIOR - DAX AIR FORCE BASE - DAY

68 x

Neary approaches the first check point on DAXES outer extremities. He pulls up to the guard kiosk in his Chevy wagon and leans out the window where a stoical, skin headed Corporal greets him mechanically. Just to one side of the kiosk, Ronnie is quick to notice a 'space junkie' wearing a fringed leather trapper coat over a T-shirt filled with op-pop-art of the solar system.

CORPORAL

(to Roy)

Yes sir.

NEARY

The Civilian Information Center, please.

CORPORAL

New Air Force recruiting?

NEARY

Not today, thanks.

CORPORAL

(pointing his thumb)

Recruiting station and information central are in that tall structure. Parking is in the lower levels.

The Corporal crams a green civilian visitor card under the windshield wiper.

JUNKIE

The Beatles changed the world...but some cosmic occurance created the Beatles.



NEW ANGLE

69

The Chevy wagon motors past a copse of pussy willow trees to a super modern building, twenty stories of cubicle window space and smoked glass.

INTERIOR - AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND

70

Starting CLOSE on Neary. He is obviously in a sitting position. It seems as though a thousand critical eyes are bathing over him.

As the ANGLE WIDENS, the room is jammed with thirty witnesses. We see half the citizens -- some with families -- who were on Crescendo Summit the night of the helicopters. Neary looks around for Jillian. She is conspicuously absent.

70 (Cont'd)

RONNIE

70 (Cont'd)

No, thank you. I'm just fine.

On collective inspection, these people are stereo typically the types of UFO reporters that one would imagine exists in the world today.

RONNIE

(whispers to Roy)

These people are all crazy.

NEARY

Shsssh!

RONNIE

I knew it would be just like this.

Ronnie nods toward the farmer who is looking around the room smiling at everybody.

RONNIE

Look at him - almost over the edge.

NEARY

(through clenched teeth)

You don't know what you're talking about.

Ronnie jabs Roy with her elbow and motions him in the direction of a sixty year old, white haired, extremely paranoid looking woman sitting by herself in a corner and staring into space like she's dead.

RONNIE

And that one over there ... on her way to the rocks below.

Suddenly, the corridor door bursts open and a silver haired Air Force Colonel emerges in his full regalia. He smiles at the Receptionist.

COLONEL

Goodnight Marian.

RECEPTIONIST

Goodnight Colonel \_\_\_\_\_.

x

The Colonel turns and extends a hand toward the paranoid looking woman Ronnie had pointed out earlier. She rises tiredly and takes the Colonel's hand, turns to the Receptionist.

WOMAN

Goodnight Marian.

RECEPTIONIST

Goodnight Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_.  
(she turns her sight to Neary)

x

CLOSE - NEARY

Roy turns to Ronnie with a big shit eating smile.

RECEPTIONIST

Folks ... you can go in now.  
Room 3655.

A secretary appears at the double glass doors. The Tolono Group, led by Neary, Jillian and Ronnie, heads for the corridor. TV NEWS CAMERAS ARE WAITING JUST ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOORS. On go the quartz lights, the cameras begin to turn and Ronnie jerks her purse to cover her face.

RONNIE (through her teeth to Roy)

Damn you!

71 INTERIOR - AIR FORCE CONFERENCE ROOM - LATE DAY

71

The country folk are in sharp contrast to the Army brass; buttoned up and steel grey men who face the crowd from design research swivel chairs and illuminated from low slung overhead arena lights and facing the civilian gathering seated on folding aluminum chairs on all four sides. It looks like Theatre in the Round.

The media is in full evidence; portable TV equipment, newsmen with flash-bulbs, giving the whole affair the feeling of a media-carnival instead of a serious exchange of information.

Neary and Jillian are near the front of the table. He is on his feet in heated debate with the officer in charge, MAJOR BENCHLEY.

(NOTE: Also in this crowd are a LANDOWNER, a friendly civilian with the brass, and the curly haired guy who was taking pictures on Crescendo Summit).

71 (Cont'd)

71 (Cont'd)

MAJOR BENCHLEY

I'm not attacking your credibility. We get incredible reports from very credible people all the time. We also get silence from millions of others who are watching the same sky.

NEARY

I'm not talking about millions of people! I'm talking about us ...  
 (gesturing to group)  
 Why doesn't someone tell us what's going on?

MAJOR BENCHLEY

We're not sure. But why must you assume it has to be an excursion vehicle from off planet?

NEARY

It wasn't the Goodyear blimp!

The TV cameras are grinding during all of this.

MAJOR BENCHLEY

So call it foreign technology. Why assume ...  
 (gesturing to sky)  
 ... it's that foreign.

NEARY

Fine! Great! Russia builds them!  
 So what are they doing in Delaware County violating Indiana air space? x

This gets a laugh from the Air Force personnel and television staff. A few of the Crescendo Summit sighters laugh too. But Gracey is taking all of this very seriously.

GRACEY

What the young man means is they were like nothing you'd ever see around here.  
 (opening her photo album)  
 Have you seen my pictures?

MAJOR BENCHLEY

Yes I have. Have you seen mine?

Major Benchley pulls from under the conference table a large color blow-up of an impressive grey disc blurred, apparently moving very fast. A few AUDIBLE GASPS from the sighters.

MAJOR BENCHLEY

(pleased at the audible  
reaction)

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a flying saucer. Made of peuter. Made in Japan. And thrown across the kitchen by one of my children.

(he puts it away. To Gracey)

I wanted to toss that in to show you we're not all polished brass about these things .. and also demonstrate there's no trick to faking a snapshot. Faking motion picture film, that's something else. Yet we've never seen anything impressive from the more than twenty million Americans who own home movie equipment.

GRACEY

(sadly)

I can't afford a movie camera.

An older respectable man raises his hand. He smokes a pipe.

REASONABLE MAN

Do your people feel the human race is not prepared to live with the cultural impact that the truth could have on mankind?

MAJOR BENCHLEY

If indeed this were true, I'm certain we could live with it. We live in the shadow of atomic annihilate in nine minutes. However, in all of my twenty years with the Air Tactical Intelligence and the Office of Special Investigations, there has been no indisputable proof of the physical existence of these things.

LANDOWNER

Who's gonna pay for the damage to my land?

MAJOR BENCHLEY

Pardon me?

LANDOWNER

I own the land these people was squatting on. They busted down a fence, put out my cattle crossing lights and left Kentucky Fried Chicken all over. Who's gonna pay for it?

(Cont'd)

MAJOR BENCHLEY

71 (Cont'd)

Did you see anything that night?

LANDOWNER

I've owned that property for fifteen years and I've never seen one damn thing!

All the TV cameras are quick to pick up this statement. Neary is losing the thrust of the meeting. Ronnie seems quietly pleased it's going this way.

NEARY

Wait a minute! Wait a goddamn minute! I saw something! This thing cost me my job. This is happening to us and we want to know what on earth it is!

MAJOR BENCHLEY

...if the evidence is good the case will stand up and this existence of extraordinary phenomenon will have to be taken seriously.

(Cont'd)

NEARY

(final outcry)

We are the evidence! We want to be taken seriously!

(Roy steps forward just opposite the Major)

Major Benchley, I saw something that didn't seem real ... but dammit ... it was!

MAJOR BENCHLEY

Can you be more articulate, Mr. Neary?

NEARY

I can't be as articulate as you. I didn't spend the last twenty years preparing some of the answers you're dishing out here. There's something important going on and you're in on it.

MAJOR BENCHLEY

Mr. Neary, what would you like to believe is going on?

NEARY

I'd like to believe I'm not going crazy. I see seven people in this room who'd also like to believe that.

A new man steps forward, a civilian who seems to outrank the brass. He speaks to the crowd in a much more familiar and reassuring manner than the Major. He reminds one of Buzz Aldrin, the astronaut. Ronnie approves of this man.

CIVILIAN

Folks, there are all kinds of ideas that would be fun to believe in ... mental telepathy, time travel, no state and federal taxes. It's no fun to go home and say, "You'll never guess what happened. I was in this restaurant, there was a bright light, I rushed outside, it was an airplane".

NEARY

What I saw didn't have any wings.

CIVILIAN

I'd wish I'd seen it. For fifteen years I've wanted to see one of those things without having to account for it. I believe in life elsewhere. The odds are against there not being ... but the expectation that we are going to be saved from ourselves by some interstellar intervention works against the necessity for us to solve our own problems.

71 (Cont'd)



(Cont'd)

NEARY

71 (Cont'd)

Can't you just tell us, is this base conducting classified tests in Mt. Pleasant foothill area?

CIVILIAN

It would be easy for me to lie and say yes. You'd walk away with a down-to-earth answer in your pocket. This isn't the case and I won't mislead you.

NEARY

I won't be told that I'm seeing things.

CIVILIAN

Good. Because I wouldn't tell you that. I don't know what the truth is.

NEARY

Well, you're not going to fool me by agreeing with me.

This gets a burst of laughter, even from Roy's allies. He is flustered and confused. Ronnie is dying. Major Benchley cuts in.

MAJOR BENCHLEY

Hysteria is a disease that can spread everywhere. You want to be careful your own impressions don't affect other members of the community. In the past week we've got some school children -- four of them -- who have been burned quite seriously playing with flares. We've got a lady here in Delaware County blames the disappearance of her three-year-old son on clouds!

Neary's ears perk up. He is disturbed by this announcement. He looks around for Jillian again.

NEARY

(to himself)

Wait a minute -- Jillian's got a kid.

(bursts out)

What's that woman's name?

A few hands have sprung up, waving for attention.

(Cont'd)

MAJOR BENCHLEY

71 (Cont'd)

Let's hear from somebody else.

He points to the farmer. The farmer draws himself to his full height and all eyes focus on him.

FARMER

I saw Bigfoot once.

The TV cameras swing around. The old Farmer's got the group in the palm of his hand. He enjoys this.

FARMER

It was up in the Sequoia National Park. Nineteen fifty-one.

NEARY

(shouting to be heard)

Why won't you tell us her name?

RONNIE

Sit down!

FARMER

(overlapping)

It had a foot on 'im, thirty-seven inches, heel to toe.

ANOTHER LISTENER

What about the little star to Bethlehem that led the three wisemen to Jesus? This star has never been satisfactorily explained by astronomers.

RONNIE

Who's Jillian?

THIRD LISTENER

Sir, is there any truth at all to this Loch Ness monster crap...

INTERIOR - CORRIDOR - EVENING

72

The meeting has just adjourned. Some people have already left. The ones remaining have the look of not having accomplished much. Neary and Ronnie are walking down the corridor; he is lost in his shredded thoughts.

RONNIE

Come on, Roy -- who's Jillian?

(Cont'd)

NEARY  
(distracted)  
She's just a woman I met...

At that moment, Major Benchley strides by. Neary catches him by the arm.

NEARY  
Excuse me, excuse me -- that woman --  
her name is Jillian -- um -- G-something,  
right?

MAJOR BENCHLEY  
(bland)  
What woman are you talking about?

NEARY  
The woman you were talking about.  
The lady in the clouds. That kid --  
His name is Barry!

MAJOR BENCHLEY  
(sympathetic)  
I'm sorry. I'm not at liberty to  
reveal names. The police are conducting  
a search. The FBI has been notified.  
(he glances around, then,  
confidentially)  
You know what -- we're not even sure  
the child is actually missing.

Neary stands there, feeling empty and confused. Major Benchley walks off down the hall. Neary goes over to the elevator, knots a fist and bops the down button. Then he bops it again.

RONNIE  
Well. I feel a lot better about this.  
Don't you?

Neary looks at his wife, a whole new kind of deep-fried anger starting to bubble.

SUBTERRANEAN LEVEL - ELEVATOR

73

The elevator door opens and Roy charges out, fizzling mad, Ronnie is behind him. He stops at the soft drink machine looking for a way to cool off and buys all of them cokes. Pausing to refresh he catches sight of an opening in the wall. It is a master control circuit panel. It is used by the maintenance department as an easy access to office lighting.

(Cont'd)

73 (Cont'd)

Neary's eyes light up. He starts for the panel - Ronnie tries to detain him but he shakes her off. He leans into the circuit breakers and is instantly familiar with the office diagram on the adjacent panel. Roy is smiling now. He flips a switch ... reads the diagram and flips another. As his smile overflows and his fingers dance along the hundreds of switches.

74 EXTERIOR - THE GLASS ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - NIGHT 74

Roy's car comes roaring out of the fluorescent subterranean garage.

The Crescendo Summit folks are beginning to congregate. The skin-headed Corporal wanders dizzily, squinting through the dusk. Others gawk and shuffle as our attention shifts to what they are looking at.

ANGLE - 20 STORY GLASS TOWER

Specific windows have been turned on...others darkened. What remains spells UFO across the entire face of the DAX Air Force Administration Facility.

A BLAST OF SUNLIGHT

75

White sand dunes oscillate to the vanishing point. A title appears in the lower portion of the picture.

"GOBI DESERT - MONGOLIA"

75 (Cont'd)

75 (Cont'd)

The sky sucks heat waves from the white sand. It must be 135 degrees in the shade ... if you can find any.

A military sand ROVER with its rather stupified crew waits for an unmarked helicopter that is just now setting down behind it. x  
everything goes white as the chopper descends and ....

ANGLE - UNMARKED CHOPPER

Lacombe and Laughlin emerge wearing safari fatigues. Lacombe carries a small camera wrapped in protective cellophane. He gasps at the furnace heat and quickly covers his eyes with a pair of Rommel goggles. Emerging from behind him are at least twenty American plain clothed soldiers, officials and Army engineers. They are all looking in the same direction. They are all carrying the same expressions - UTTER CHAOTIC SURPRISE - !

Lacombe squints with awe through his double-tints.

One man actually genuflects his disbelief and ...

Everyone walks forward finally ... taking the ANGLE TO INCLUDE ...

In the worst reaches of the desert wasteland is an impossible sight.

There is a 425 foot ocean freighter lying on its starboard side against the flattened dunes ... undefineable, strangulating and strange ... It is the M.S. MARINE SULPHUR QUEEN.

A member of the Army Engineers is locked in argument with a project official.

ENGINEER

What do you mean, move it in tact!  
This looks like a job for Super-man  
... not the Corps of Army Engineers!

David Laughlin steps forward to be along side Lacombe. He is completely aghast. Strangely, Lacombe is walking forward away from the ocean freighter and toward an encampment of Mongolian families, their camals and belongings. SUB-TITLES FOLLOW:

LACOMBE

The more light we throw on this,  
the longer the shadows spread

DAVID

But it has to mean something.

LACOMBE

Perhaps it means nothing like a  
child running a stick along a fence.