

OUTER RANGE

Written by

Brian Watkins

Chapter 1: "That Eternal Void"

Benjamin Blake - Manager  
Heroes & Villains Entertainment  
benjamin@heroesandvillains-ent.com  
323.850.2990

ICM Partners / Pete Stone - Agent  
310.550.4482

**TEASER**

EXT. RANGE - WILDERNESS - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the ancient face of a SLEEPING LONE BUFFALO. Its nostrils breathe deep like smokestacks into the crisp night.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

... You know anything about a Greek god called Chronus...?

*Breathe in. Breathe out.* The ominous rhythm goes on, as we see more of this near-extinct American icon, oddly without a herd: leathery lips, wrinkled nose, bearded chin, and then... we discover two traditional Arapaho ARROWS, shot into the buffalo's back. DARK BLOOD has trickled from the wounds.

Suddenly we hear: FOOTSTEPS -- *FAST* -- in the distance. They're getting closer. The Buffalo's eyes BURST open at the sound to reveal its glassy black gaze, staring right into our souls. The buffalo STARTLES and stands and trots off.

EXT. WYOMING WILDERNESS - NIGHT

The range. A vast valley. Behind it, the jagged, looming peaks of the Tetons. Postcard image of the American West.

Far off, in moon-made silhouette, A DARK FIGURE FLEES across this landscape. Something HEAVY and LIMP on his shoulders.

EXT. RANGE - WILDERNESS - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON the FLEEING figure -- the PANICKED FACE OF A 60-YEAR-OLD MAN. He's sprinting. Feet SLAMMING the dark earth. Boots. Jeans. NO SHIRT. BARE NAKED BLOODIED TORSO. Barrel chest. A deluge of thick sweat. Panting. Heaving. Oblivion in his eyes.

Slung high atop his shoulders... THE BATTERED, LIFELESS BODY OF AN ADULT MALE. The body awkwardly bounces as the man continues to RUN. He LOOKS BACK in fear of his pursuer, blood dripping across the land, his brute strength on full display.

He is BOLTING.

He is DESPERATE.

He is ROYAL ABBOTT.

And he looks as if the fate of the world rests on his shoulders... because it does.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
 ... He carried a sickle... used it  
 to cut a *hole*... a tear in the  
 cosmos, between heaven and earth...

Royal BARRELS forward and suddenly STOPS when he arrives at:

A small CANVAS FLAG, marked with PURPLE STICK FIGURES,  
 painted by a CHILD. It FLAPS, moonlit in the night air.

Royal approaches the odd flag, body on his shoulders, with a  
 careful sense of ceremony. He surveys the ground before him  
 then carefully takes three... steps... forward.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
 ... to separate this world from the  
 next... To separate mortality, from  
 immortality...

He looks back, hesitant. He LIFTS the body OVER his head --  
 Herculean adrenaline fueling his every muscle.

He closes his eyes. Then Royal HEAVES the body forward.

We watch the floppy body turn and fall. But right as the body  
 is about to hit the ground...

IT DISAPPEARS INTO THE EARTH. It's gone. Somehow the body has  
 completely VANISHED. And Royal is relieved... for a moment.

He puts his hands to his knees, catching his breath, when...

*SCRATCH* -- the sound of an igniting lighter. Royal WHIPS his  
 head to the noise. His face PALES as he sees... a FLAME,  
 aglow off to his side, twenty feet away, the bearer unseen.

We hear footsteps approach, scuffing the dirt.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
 ... The world has been waiting for  
 something like this.

CLOSE ON Royal's petrified countenance as he sees who it is.  
 He's caught. He's done. He's over. We stay on his glassy gaze  
 as he continues to suck in air: *Breathe in... Breathe out.*

**END OF TEASER**

ON BLACK:

SUPER: 7 DAYS EARLIER

ACT ONE

INT. ROYAL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A five a.m. purple dawn shines on a naked Royal, laying in bed. We survey his leathery, rancher's body, smattered in scars. Next to him lays his wife CECILIA (60) -- salt-of-the-earth; resilient, weather-beaten features. She rustles, turns over, and opens her eyes to find Royal wide awake.

CECILIA

I prayed you'd sleep. Did it work?

ROYAL

I slept... I sort of slept. You?

Royal stands and pulls on jeans, a t-shirt, boots, as:

CECILIA

I had the dream again. She wandered right out of the dark. Amy ran into her arms. Perry too. We all wept... I didn't wanna wake up.

Royal kisses Cecilia and starts out the door, but stops when:

CECILIA

Royal...? Don't tell that to Perry.

ROYAL

(exiting)  
Never do.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Royal stands before a bedroom door littered with CHILDREN'S ARTWORK -- unicorns, dolls, princesses, cowgirls. He quietly opens the door and finds an empty and unmade twin bed.

He continues down the hall and opens another bedroom door.

We see what's obviously an adult bedroom, and find AMY (9) -- tomboy, pigtails, instantly endearing -- sleeping in a queen bed. On the floor, with a single pillow, sleeps her father PERRY (30's) -- Royal's eldest son; obedient, loyal, strong.

Royal smiles and quietly shuts the door.

EXT. ABBOTT RANCH - DAWN

Violet daybreak on Royal's ranch. Morning mist on the ground.

We see the ranch house -- dilapidated yet authentic rural charm, proudly traditional. Like many family ranches, three generations of Abbott's live here.

Fifty yards from the house live enclosed STABLES, A BARN, a few open PENS marked by tall metal GATES. But mainly on view is the VAST EXPANSE of Royal's LAND: three thousand PRISTINE secluded acres of mostly flat valley, framed by the Tetons.

Royal steps out the back door and off his porch -- tucks in his t-shirt, clears some morning phlegm -- and then heads towards his stables. Ready for business.

He greets three eager horses and strokes their manes before unhitching the gate and saddling his brown mare.

ROYAL

Alright lets count 'em up, Tilley.

EXT. PASTURE - MORNING - LATER

Royal rides across his land -- preferring horse to a truck -- the sun now RISING over his shoulder. He raises binoculars and sees his large herd of cattle, grazing in the distance. He lowers the binoculars and heels the horse.

But then Royal suddenly notices something strange: the hair on his horse's mane is standing straight up. Royal looks at his arm... his own hair is standing straight up.

We catch a glimpse of the time on his watch: six-thirty.

An eerie LOW-END RUMBLE begins somewhere in the distance. Royal looks around for the source -- nothing.

A sudden SHARP PAIN strikes inside his head. He winces. For a millisecond we FLASH INSIDE HIS BRAIN to see BLURRED SHADOWS speeding across his field of vision as the sound continues.

The sound grows, then WARPS and deepens into a core-rattling BASS. Royal GRITS his teeth. Finally the sound emits a MASSIVE, EXPANSIVE, INHALING BOOM. Then... silence.

The pain passes. The hair falls. Royal looks around, stunned, then heels his horse and turns back towards the house.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Royal enters to find his family eating breakfast: Cecilia at the stove, while Amy, Perry, and Rhett (25) -- Royal's younger son; unshaven and grimy, rebellious, tough -- sit at the table. Local morning news BLARES on a small TV.

ROYAL  
Did you all hear that?

A pause as his family looks up at him with blank stares.

CECILIA  
Hear what?

ROYAL  
You didn't--? There was a--

CECILIA  
(awkward pause, then)  
Royal... is everything alright?

ROYAL  
Yeah... Nevermind. It was nothing.  
I'm gonna go finish the count.

CECILIA  
Well you better finish it quick.  
We're leaving for church in twenty.

ROYAL  
It's not even seven o'clock.

The family exchanges confused sideways glances.

AMY  
Grandpa... It's ten a.m.

Royal looks at his watch -- it's mysteriously stopped. He shakes it, listens to it. But it's broken.

RHETT  
Time to get a cell phone, pops.  
I've been telling you--

CECILIA  
That'll be the day.

RHETT  
--you can do everything on  
'em. It's easy, I promise.

PERRY  
You need a tower out here  
before it'll be useful.

AMY  
Can I get a cell phone? Why?

PERRY  
No. No. End of story. No.

AMY  
I'm finished. I'll get ready to go.

PERRY  
Amy, go with grandma and grandpa.  
I've gotta meet with Sheriff Joy.

AMY  
About mommy?

PERRY  
Never you mind what about.

A little melee as they all clear their plates and file out, leaving Royal standing alone, still mystified, staring at his broken watch.

INT. CHURCH - LATER THAT MORNING

From a keyboard we hear a poorly-played version of "I Need Thee Every Hour" as we see a carpeted, vanilla, low-ceilinged, Protestant church.

We see Cecilia sing along with the fifty-some other congregants. With sad longing she looks back at...

... Royal, who leans against the back wall, reading a NEWSPAPER, ignoring the service. He's not here by choice. We see a headline from his paper read: "Wall Street Meltdown Continues" and the paper's date, "September 17, 2008."

EXT. FREMONT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - LATER THAT MORNING

A few pickups and sedans and one 4x4 Police Truck occupy a small parking lot for a meager Sheriff's Office.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Down a hallway, Perry trails behind SHERIFF JOY PIKE (55) -- typical beige getup; she's big, butch, carefree, confident, lifelong law enforcer for Fremont County. Morning paper in hand. They pass a kitchenette with donuts and coffee.

SHERIFF JOY  
You want a donut? They're terrible.

PERRY  
I'm fine.

SHERIFF JOY  
Asked for bagels and some numb nuts shows up with these.  
(re: the newspaper)  
You see this? They're turning iPods into fuckin' telephones. Crazy.  
(calling back)  
Andre! I'm in the office with Perry, don't bother us!

They head into Sheriff Joy's office. She shuts her door.

INT. SHERIFF JOY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff Joy throws the paper on her desk. They sit.

SHERIFF JOY  
 Sorry to get you hear on a Sunday.  
 They called last night and I--

PERRY  
 Who's they?

SHERIFF JOY  
 FBI.  
 (pause)  
 They're "de-elevating" Rebecca's  
 case.

PERRY  
 What the fuck does that mean?

SHERIFF JOY  
 I asked the same thing. But look--

PERRY  
 What-the-fuck-does-that-mean.

SHERIFF JOY  
 They're gonna stop looking for her.  
 (beat)  
 Nine month mark they lower the  
 priority, particularly if there's  
 any chance she left on her own.

PERRY  
 How many times do I gotta tell  
 them: there's not a chance in hell  
 that my wife abandoned her family.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

Nine months ago, midnight, as we hear the Sheriff continue...

SHERIFF JOY (V.O.)  
 You and I know that, but that's not  
 -- hey, look at me Perry -- I know  
 this is hell...

Perry rolls over in bed to touch his wife Rebecca. But she's not there. He sits up, searching, with an odd premonition.



INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

We see Perry discover the WIDE OPEN door to the back porch, no sign of a break-in. He peers into the OUTER DARK, the black bearing an eerie and otherworldly vastness.

EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

Perry holds a sleepy/scared Amy in his arms as he talks with Sheriff Joy and two other COPS, but we can't hear them.

SHERIFF JOY (V.O.)  
 ... But I'm not giving up until  
 there's a reason to.

We watch Perry, talking to the COPS, shaking his head "no", without answers. He strokes Amy's head.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Perry soaking in this haunting mystery.

SHERIFF JOY  
 Look, I'll make some calls, see if  
 I can't get some state agents on  
 this. Now you take care of the  
 family you still got... Leave the  
 worrying to me, ok? Amy needs you.

Perry nods; we see his taciturn resolve stifle the agony.

INT. CHURCH - LATER

A SEA OF KIDS rush out of Sunday School as the service ends.

The other congregants shake hands and greet each other on their way out. Royal is avoiding them, when Amy runs up to him waving a crafty PAINTED PIECE OF CANVAS.

AMY  
 Look. I made it for you grandpa.

ROYAL  
 Oh thank you. What is it?

ANGLE ON the piece of CANVAS: a series of PURPLE-PAINTED STICK FIGURES -- the same from our teaser. There are six prominent smiling stick figures up front and several dozen smaller ones in the background.

AMY

They made us paint what we thought heaven looked like. That's me, you, grandma, uncle Rhett, daddy... and mommy. Then a bunch of other folks.

ROYAL

That's-- that's great, honey. Find your grandma, ok? Let's head home.

Royal tucks the heaven-painted canvas into his jacket.

INT./EXT. TRUCK/PRAIRIE - LATER THAT DAY

Perry drives his truck down an empty open road, brooding over the Sheriff's news. He looks off to the side then suddenly SLAMS his brakes as he spots...

The LONE BUFFALO standing on the side of the road -- looking EERILY ANCIENT and statuesque -- the TWO ARROWS still protruding from its back.

Perry gets out of the truck, perplexed by the mysterious lone beast. He slowly approaches the buffalo, aiming to pluck out the odd arrows. But the buffalo SNORTS, and rears its head in caution. They stare at each other. For a moment, it looks as if maybe this beast will speak, but it turns and walks away.

Perry follows him at his side. The buffalo trots. Perry picks up his pace. The buffalo begins RUNNING and Perry SPRINTS right alongside him -- *there is something primal out here* -- and they STAMPEDE together across the prehistoric terrain.

EXT. PASTURE - MORNING - TWO DAYS LATER

We see a large herd of cattle spread across Royal's property.

EXT. PASTURE - CONTINUOUS

Royal and Perry herd and count the cattle on horseback.

PERRY

I'm only gettin' two seventy-nine.

ROYAL

Well go again.

PERRY

I counted twice.

CLOSE ON Royal: *shit*. He surveys his herd with furrowed brow.

ROYAL  
Think it's the south fence again?

PERRY  
I checked, it's fine.

ROYAL  
Goddammit... You sure?

A pause while Perry incredulously stares at his father.

INT. KITCHEN - RANCH HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Cecilia is making sandwiches as a dusty Royal enters.

ROYAL  
Bologna?

CECILIA  
It's Tuesday isn't it? Where's Perry?

ROYAL  
We're missing two.

CECILIA  
What?! Did you check the--?

ROYAL  
South fence is fine. Where's Rhett?

Royal starts down the hallway, as:

CECILIA  
Boy, that's the million-dollar. I'd check his bedroom but I'm afraid who else I'd find in there.

INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE RHETT'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Royal knocks on Rhett's bedroom door. Nothing. He opens the door and sees an unmade bed and no one there.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Royal heads down the house's long dirt driveway towards Rhett's raggedy F-150 truck, careened off to the side. He opens the driver's side door and finds a sleeping Rhett, wearing nothing but boots and underwear.

He looks in the truck bed and sees clothes, beer cans, women's underwear.

He grabs Rhett and shakes him until he finally stirs awake and struggles to open his sun-shocked eyes.

RHETT

Hey. Hey! What the hell?!

ROYAL

You gonna let your brother do every goddamn thing for you? Get dressed, we're checking the fences.

Royal begins to head towards the stables but then FREEZES as he spots a bizarre entity:

An itinerant, blonde hippie, AUTUMN (30's), walking up the driveway. She has wild hair, homemade clothes, a camping backpack, some trademark 'granola' gear. But there's also a shotgun slung on her back. She is strewn with steel cans and spiritual totems and dead fowl strung on a rope, looking like a mix of Janis Joplin and Calamity Jane.

Confounded, Royal and Rhett examine her as she approaches:

ROYAL (CONT'D)

This you?

RHETT

Not that I recall.

Royal heads towards Autumn with:

ROYAL

Somethin' I can do for you?

AUTUMN

Oh God, I sure hope so. Looking for the Abbott Ranch. Am I near it?

ROYAL

That's my ranch. You're here... Where you from...? Boulder?

AUTUMN

What gave it away? The hair?

ROYAL

The everything. Who sent you?

AUTUMN

Guy named Cal. Thought we'd get along. Said you're a conservationist. Keep your land the way it was, natural, sustainable and all that.

ROYAL

Well we just call it tradition. And if my brother thought anything of it he wouldn't have took off.

AUTUMN

He didn't mention you're brothers.

ROYAL

Sounds about right.

RHETT

You homeless?

AUTUMN

Nope.

ROYAL

What are you then?

AUTUMN

I'm a poet.

ROYAL

You're a poet.

AUTUMN

I'm a poet.

ROYAL

(a beat, then)

We're not in the market for poems.

AUTUMN

Good, I'm not selling any.

ROYAL

So what're you here for then?

AUTUMN

Oh I dunno. Enlightenment. Peace. Inspiration. Really just a good place to camp, to be honest. It'd just be a few days. I'm making my way up to Montana, eventually.

ROYAL

(a beat, then)

We're not a tourist ranch, we're a cattle ranch.

AUTUMN

I know. That's no matter to me.

RHETT

What's with the gun?

AUTUMN

I have to eat don't I? Please. You wouldn't even see me, I'd go as far out as you'd like... I can pay you.

She takes out a stack of CASH and throws it to Royal who catches it. Royal regards it, perplexed: it's a stack of HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS. Rhett's stunned. Royal starts to say something in protest when Autumn stops him:

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Take it. I know you need it.

ROYAL

And how would you know that?

AUTUMN

You're a family ranch. Economy's built to leave you behind. Take it. I don't like money. Or, I don't see the point of it.

ROYAL

Well, there's some things around here that sure make it handy.

AUTUMN

Great. It's yours. I'm just looking to camp. What do you say?

Royal looks at Rhett, who is flipping through the stack of cash. Autumn smiles -- she's a total charmer.

ROYAL

Ok... You can camp on the West pasture. Follow the fence with the red markers. *Nowhere else*. There's a spigot in the stables for water.

AUTUMN

Thank you, sir.

ROYAL

Royal... Just Royal.

A coy smile grows on her face as she extends her grimy hand.

AUTUMN

Autumn... Glad to finally meet you.

Royal, still wary, watches her head towards the stables.

RHETT

This must be five thousand dollars.

ROYAL

Well count it later. We're missing two damn cows goddammit.

RHETT

Well where'd they go?

Heading inside, a vexed Royal throws his hands back at Rhett.

EXT. PASTURE - TILLERSON RANCH - HOURS LATER

REVVV -- we COAST beside THREE SPEEDING ATVs barreling past several head of cattle -- clouds of brown earth behind them.

This is the upscale TILLERSON RANCH, an operation wholly opposite to the traditional ways of the neighboring Abbotts.

Leading the trio is TREVOR (32) -- moustache, big sunglasses, dip of chew. Behind him are his lackey brothers: LUKE (28) and BILLY (21). Their ATVs are as high-end as their hats and boots -- a grim triumvirate exuding privilege and greed.

Billy nearly CLIPS an alarmed CALF. He laughs, dribbling tobacco spit, and we see what they're heading towards:

EXT. PASTURE - ABBOTT RANCH - CONTINUOUS

Royal and Perry and a hungover Rhett on horseback scan the FENCED PERIMETER of their property.

Royal spots the ATVs dusting up the ground, speeding his way.

RHETT

What do these assholes want?

The ATVs reach the men. Trevor and Luke hop off and greet the Abbott clan. Billy keeps his ATV idle, revving it and haphazardly attempting wheelies behind his brothers, as:

ROYAL

Hi Trevor. How'd your dad's surgery go? I been meaning to--

TREVOR

We came knockin' on your door and your wife says you're out at the fences, looking for a couple heifers? Ya'll ain't trying to spoil our herd again are ya?

ROYAL

Son, it's been eight years since our cattle had that disease.

RHETT

And it didn't come from us.

LUKE

It sure did. Your cheap-ass old school bullshit killed fifty thousand dollars of our inventory. Ya'll got to upgrade your damn systems.

ROYAL

Look, I know two head ain't much to you all, but that's a loss we can't afford so I'd sure appreciate--

TREVOR

Can't afford? Fuck, whose fault is that, pal? You left five mil on the table when my dad offered to buy you out, and now, you're what, how much in debt? Whoo! I just don't get you, old man. Why would you care more about the damn environment than taking care of your own family?!

LUKE

All your tree-huggin' bullshit ain't gonna matter if your land keeps disappearing the way it is.

ROYAL

(a suspicious beat, then)  
What're you talking about?

Trevor GRINS and gestures to Luke, who takes a LETTER out of his back pocket and hands it to Royal. Royal reads it, as:

TREVOR

We felt it'd be best to break it to you in person. Seems the state says you're a mile over our property line.

Royal reads, quietly fuming, then hands the letter to Perry.

ROYAL

This is bullshit and you know it.

PERRY

Who the hell did you pay off to--



TREVOR

You got thirty days to move your fences and get off our land. If not, we'll see your asses in court.

ROYAL

Your Dad know you've done this?

They hop back on their ATVs and start them up. Trevor puts on sunglasses and shouts over their loud REVS with:

TREVOR

My Dad ain't in charge anymore, Royal. I am... Hey, we'll let you know if we see those cows!

The Tillersons speed off, their middle fingers in the air.

RHETT

Fuckin' assholes.

PERRY

(re: the letter)  
Is this legit?

ROYAL

It's legit. They been angling for this ranch for decades. Bastards finally just decided to cheat.

RHETT

Well you're not just gonna let 'em get away with bribery, are you?

ROYAL

I'll figure somethin' out. But until then, lets go find these damn cows. Rhett, you take north. Perry, east. I'll take west. Go slow. Look close.

Royal tucks the letter in his pocket. They ride off.

EXT. EAST PASTURE - DUSK - HOURS LATER

Perry rides along the east pasture fence, searching for a breach. The Tetons loom in purple dusk behind him.

EXT. NORTH PASTURE - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

Rhett lazily rides along the north pasture fence, searching. He pulls a flask out of his pocket and gives it a swig.

EXT. WEST PASTURE/RANGE - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

Royal rides along the west fences, finding no breach. The dusk is closing in, the sun setting over his ranch.

He lifts binoculars from his neck and scans his land.

He sees Autumn, way out in the distance, next to her tent, taking off her clothes. She looks stunning -- a natural beauty -- now stripped of all her gear. Royal watches in awe for a few seconds too long before she begins to turn his way.

Flustered, his head whips to look in another direction.

Far off, in the middle of the range, he sees a rabbit.

A SHARP HEADACHE suddenly SHOCKS the front of his brain. He squints and pinches the bridge of his nose.

He looks again through the binoculars and sees the rabbit scuttle through the prairie grass.

Then, out of nowhere... the rabbit DISAPPEARS.

Royal refocuses the binoculars, unsure of what he just saw.

He looks again. Nothing. He heels the horse and they trot towards the sight of the missing rabbit.

Royal rides further and further out into the range.

And then... Royal spots something he's never seen.

The horse suddenly STOPS at the sight. It sidles and bows its head in fear. Royal calms her with a stroke over her mane.

He STARES at his land, mouth agape in curiosity and wonder.

We pull up above Royal to see what he sees, now with a cosmic God-like perspective, to reveal, in the middle of the range:

AN IMMENSE, DARK HOLE IN THE EARTH.

Its edges are EERILY BLURRED. Looking into it, he can see NOTHING: no light, no sides, no bottom, no anything.

Stupefied, Royal dismounts his horse, then looks at his arm: his hair is standing straight up.

He looks into the hole, examining its odd edges, the diameter ten or twelve feet wide.

He finds a nearby rock and chucks it in the hole. He listens for the rock to hit the bottom... But there is no sound.

He thinks and looks back at his horse who rears its head, afraid, in tune with some deeper reaches of the world.

Royal grabs a fistful of pebbles and dirt and slowly lets it TRICKLE into the hole, listening for some knowable aspect of its character or origin... But he hears... nothing.

Royal cautiously goes to his knees at the edge of the hole.

His horse begins to STAMP the ground behind him.

Slowly... Royal REACHES his hand inside the hole, and...

IT DISAPPEARS INTO A BLACK VOID.

He quickly pulls his hand out, terrified.

ROYAL  
(whispered)  
What in the hell...?

He reaches back in the hole. His hand disappears again. He moves around his lost appendage, STIRRING the vacant black, *seeing nothing but nothing*, feeling no difference whatsoever.

He goes to his stomach... he slowly inches the entire length of his arm into the mysterious hole.

With each second the horse NEIGHS louder and STAMPS harder.

Royal lays on the ground, his arm completely disappeared into the VOID. He stares in wonder at this MYSTIFYING PIT.

The pain in Royal's head suddenly SHOCKS him once more -- Royal WINCES and pulls out of the hole to grab his head.

He SHOUTS in pain and his horse suddenly BOLTS OFF, speeding away across his pasture.

He stands and looks back at the EERIE... LOOMING... BIDDING HOLE.

He takes the Tillerson's land claim letter out of his back pocket. He reads it again, then crumples it up, and DROPS the letter into the hole. We watch it magically disappear.

ANGLE ON Royal, standing over the void, struck with mystery, as the dusk begins to turn to night.

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

INT. KITCHEN - ABBOTT HOUSE - NIGHT

Cecilia CHOPS vegetables in the kitchen. Out the window facing their pasture she sees Royal, exhausted, approaching from the dark distance. She STARTLES and DROPS her knife.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

THREE PILLS, water-- Royal swallows them. Cecilia, mid-gripe:

CECILIA

Perry stabled her, had to convince me you weren't dead out there.

ROYAL

I'm fine. They're just headaches.

CECILIA

'Just headaches' are what scared off your horse? If you're not gonna tell me what's up--

ROYAL

I told you: I had this, I dunno, like a shooting pain, fell off the damn horse, horse ran away... That's it... Now don't look at me like that, it's not--

CECILIA

They've told us this could happen, Royal... You need help... You can't stop somethin' that's comin'. It'll be here soon enough.

Royal looks out to the night, dreading his inevitable decline.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Royal sits wearing a hospital gown in a waiting room, which BUZZES with the awful sounds of medical machines. Next to him sits an OLD WOMAN (85), who is full-out missing her nose -- a crater now marks some cruel cancerous past. She mumbles with incessant dementia. Royal does all he can to disregard her.

NURSE (O.S.)

Royal Abbott?

Royal stands -- gripping the back of his gown closed.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Royal's back in street clothes, now mid-conversation with a DOCTOR (50's) examining an MRI scan. Cecilia is nearby.

DOCTOR  
And how long has it been since you  
were in the rodeo?

Royal looks at CECILIA with incredulity.

CECILIA  
Well you didn't write it down so I  
did.

DOCTOR  
How many concussions would you say  
you had riding bulls?

EXT. RODEO - NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

Royal (here 25) -- FLUNG from a BULL like a rag doll. His head BANGS onto the dirt. He stands, wobbles forward. The bull CHARGES him from behind, preparing to TRAMPLE him.

DOCTOR (V.O.)  
... More than three?

A series of quick shots of Royal FLUNG from a bull. Again. And again. And again.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

ROYAL  
Maybe... Hard to remember really.

DOCTOR  
Do you forget things often?

CECILIA  
(a beat, then)  
Yes. He does.

DOCTOR  
Any trouble speaking or standing?

ROYAL  
No.

DOCTOR  
What about vision? Any difficulty  
seeing, or, hallucinatory spells?

Royal swallows, hides -- the HOLE quickly FLASHES in his mind.

ROYAL  
I can see fine.

CECILIA  
His father had Alzheimer's so I--

ROYAL  
Cecilia. I'm only sixty.

CECILIA  
And I'm trying to make sure you  
make it to seventy!

DOCTOR  
Well brain trauma takes many forms.  
It could be early onset dementia.  
But you're still young enough to--

ROYAL  
You don't have to sugarcoat it.

DOCTOR  
Ok... well... at the very worst...  
this looks like ALS.

Royal, SHOCKED. Cecilia, trying to suppress her fear.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
If you've had several concussions  
that's very much in the cards. So --  
if we're being really cautious --  
I'd recommend a number of tests...

INT. OPERATING ROOM - **FLASH FORWARD**

We hear the Doctor go on, as Royal -- back in hospital gown --  
lays on his side, going through the tests. But now there's a  
STRANGE and DEEP disturbance in his expression. Something has  
utterly SHAKEN this man, and we see it.

DOCTOR (V.O.)  
We can start with a lumbar drain--

A needle enters Royal's upper spine, followed by a tube. We  
enter the tube and follow it into:

INT. ROYAL'S BRAIN - **FLASH FORWARD**

We SPEED through a series DARK CANYONS in Royal's brain.  
Synapses SPARK, looking like something from outer space.

DOCTOR (V.O.)  
 (now muffled)  
 -- it just clears some spinal fluid  
 that might be in your brain.

FASTER -- we wind through the endlessly complex universe of the mind, searching -- FLARES of orange and blue. Then suddenly we HALT as we discover...

BLACK BILE, seeping into crevasses like a swampy mold, hidden deep in the recesses of Royal's brain... WAITING TO SPREAD.

DOCTOR (V.O.)  
 Right now your scan doesn't show  
 anything immediately alarming, but  
 we'll need to keep an eye on it.

We RETREAT, back out of Royal's brain, through the tube and:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - PRE-OPERATION

... Back to when the news first went down. The Doctor hands Royal a pamphlet that reads "Understanding Brain Trauma" and a prescription that reads "Amitriptyline".

DOCTOR  
 I wanna try you on a drug that's  
 used for post-concussion syndrome.

Royal begrudgingly takes the pamphlet and prescription and tucks them inside his jacket.

CECILIA  
 Does it have to be pills? Are there  
 changes in his diet or routine--?

ROYAL  
 Yeah look-- Just tell me what I  
 gotta change and I'll change it.

DOCTOR  
 (a beat, then)  
 This is not... You can't change  
 this... Brain deterioration is not  
 a matter of "if", but "when". We  
 just don't know what the future  
 holds, so all we can do now is  
 treat your pain... and wait and  
 see... And if I were you, I'd  
 consider telling your son.

ROYAL  
 No. Perry's going through enough.

DOCTOR

I meant Rhett... I hear he's taking  
after you? Sounds like the whole  
county'll be there Friday night.

CLANG CLANG CLANG...

EXT. RODEO - FRIDAY NIGHT

Cowbells CLANG. A crowd CHEERS. BRIGHT flood lights. A small stadium -- the convivial atmosphere of a local rodeo.

Behind a gate: grunts, breath from nostrils, silhouettes of scrambling men. The crowd ready, cheering in anticipation.

The gate BURSTS open and charging out comes a leather-chapped Rhett, riding a bull -- *teeth clenched, forearm bulging. No helmet.* He's JERKED and TWISTED and finally VIOLENTLY FLUNG up in the air only to land -- SMACK -- onto the dirt floor.

ANGLE ON Rhett's PAINED face in the dirt, as the feet of rodeo clowns and the hooves of the bull trot away in the b.g.

EXT. BLEECHERS - CONTINUOUS

Cecilia, Royal, Perry, and Amy all watch. Amy eats popcorn. Royal and Perry drink beers. Cecilia WINCES at the sight of Rhett going down. We survey some of the crowd:

-We see Sheriff Joy, in uniform, drinking soda, cheering alongside her partner MARTHA (55), whooping it up.

-The three asshole Tillerson brothers, throwing peanuts.

-Other ranchers, kids, old-timers; a friendly, family scene.

LOUDSPEAKER (O.S.)

Rhett Abbott on Honeymaker -- 3.4  
seconds. Next, from Lander...

EXT. RODEO - CONTINUOUS

Amidst the RAUCOUS CHEERS we see a fuming Rhett DART over and scream at the BULL HANDLER. The handler puts his finger in Rhett's chest. Rhett suddenly GRABS the handler by the vest and YANKS him into the ring, slamming him down on the ground.

THEY BRAWL in the dirt. Six to eight handlers and rodeo clowns charge over to the men, pulling them apart as they KICK and SWEAR amidst the noise of the crowd.



EXT. BLEECHERS - LATER

Rhett holds a rag to his bloodied cheek as he speaks to Royal from the rodeo floor, through a gate.

RHETT

Wasn't enough. I'm not advancing.

Rhett spots the three Tillerson brothers in the stands. Trevor mockingly claps at Rhett from afar. Royal sees.

ROYAL

Ignore them. You did fine. That bull hasn't rode well in years.

Perry comes down behind them with Cecilia and Amy.

PERRY

Hey. You'll hit it next time.

AMY

That was a bullshit bull, Rhett.

PERRY/CECILIA/ROYAL

Hey now./Amy, language!/Amy, quit!

AMY

What?! That's what grandpa said!

CECILIA

We'll see you at home?

Rhett nods as they all head out.

Rhett looks up to the stands and sees Trevor Tillerson hitting on a young Hispanic girl, MARIA (23) -- jeans, boots, t-shirt, long flowing hair. We see Maria hesitantly give Trevor her number, as he punches it into his phone.

She looks down and sees Rhett staring at her. She smiles. Rhett waves, still embarrassed in defeat.

EXT. AUTUMN'S CAMP - WEST PASTURE - DAWN

Autumn hangs some clothes to dry. We see her tent and firepit; she's smoking her routine morning JOINT.

EXT. RANGE - CONTINUOUS

Royal stands at the edge of THE HOLE with a curious but stern gaze. We see his horse wait -- now obedient, yet still cautious -- twenty yards away from this eerie pit.

He reaches into his jacket and pulls out the pamphlet and prescription from the doctor. He feels in his jacket again and discovers the STICK-FIGURED CANVAS that Amy gave him.

He looks behind him. He crumples up the pamphlet and prescription and chucks them into the HOLE. They DISAPPEAR.

Royal squints at the sight, still MYSTIFIED.

He looks at Amy's painted canvas. He looks at the hole.

EXT. RANGE - MOMENTS LATER

Royal sits atop his horse. We see Amy's CANVAS PAINTING now tied to a stick like a FLAG, marking the edge of the HOLE. The purple stick figures DANCE in the wind.

Far off, we hear a GUN SHOT. It ECHOES in the vast range.

Royal turns and sees the SMOKE of a fire trailing skyward.

EXT. AUTUMN'S CAMP - WEST PASTURE - LATER

We see Autumn, PLUCKING FEATHERS FROM A DEAD BIRD that she's shot, next to her small FIRE. Royal approaches on horseback.

AUTUMN

Morning. You hungry?

ROYAL

Fine thanks. Everything ok out here?

AUTUMN

Perfect. Quite a piece of property you got. There a reason you haven't grazed around the creek down there?

ROYAL

We try and keep it how nature intended. The wolves are pesky but it actually makes for a better pasture everywhere else... Why?

Autumn smiles, plucks a feather from her fowl.

AUTUMN

Bet your neighbors ain't happy about that. I've seen more species of wildlife than anywhere in the state. You come here just to chat?

ROYAL

No, just-- if you don't mind, do me a favor and just stay between here and the creek... Ok?

AUTUMN

(a suspicious beat, then)  
Ok.

ROYAL

I know I said the west pasture but--  
(beat)  
Does anyone know you're here? I mean... there's no cell reception. If you got hurt, you couldn't--

AUTUMN

I won't get hurt.

ROYAL

Ok... What makes you so sure?

AUTUMN

Just got a feeling. I'll be safe. Don't worry. Like I always say: the world plays out how it's supposed to... so, nothin' to worry about.

ROYAL

And what if the world is supposed to turn out bad?

AUTUMN

Bad how?

ROYAL

Well... like the way it did for your pheasant there.

A pause. She smiles.

AUTUMN

What would you sell this ranch for?

ROYAL

I wouldn't.

AUTUMN

I thought you'd say that. From what your brother told me, you're gonna have to sooner than later. I know you don't wanna saddle your sons with all that debt. C'mon now, name a price. Five million? Six?

ROYAL

You talk as if you have it on you.

They smile, nearly flirting now. Autumn continues to pluck feathers from the dead pheasant.

AUTUMN

Maybe I do.

ROYAL

Prove it.

AUTUMN

A woman's gotta keep her secrets,  
doesn't she? Unless you wanna  
swap... You got any secrets you  
wanna swap, Royal?

She SMILES and VICIOUSLY PLUCKS a stubborn feather from the dead pheasant as Royal nervously smiles back.

EXT. THE PIT BAR & CANTINA - THAT NIGHT

The only lively bar around. A mix of folks drinking mostly bottled beer: Wyoming ranch hands, Mexican vaqueros, day laborers, rodeo workers. Hispanic, black, white, Native American -- a rural epicenter for singles in the region.

DISCO BALL on a dance floor. Total meat market, flirting, dancing to a mix of country, hip hop, Latin pop, grupera. But right now Emmylou Harris' "C'est La Vie" is on the jukebox.

We see Perry and Rhett at a table that's already littered with 4 or 5 empty bottles and shot glasses.

PERRY

... It's a slump. You'll ride better at the next one, let it go.

RHETT

Next one is six months away! I feel like I'm just wasting my time. You had a wife and kid by my age.

PERRY

Shit man if I was your age again... Take some risks while you can, that's all I'll say. What do you always tell me: no regrets, right?

RHETT

Right... I do think we're gonna regret this tequila though.

They laugh, then Perry spots something across the room.

PERRY

Well there's the one.

ANGLE ON Maria, having just walked through the front door with two FEMALE FRIENDS. But Maria is the only one we track, as Rhett catches sight of her and everything slows down.

RHETT

Fuck me.

PERRY

Ok... Go on then... We're not even gonna talk about it, just go.

Perry pushes Rhett. He stands up and starts towards Maria. We get inside Rhett's romantic tunnel vision, and follow him strutting towards her. But suddenly... Trevor Tillerson BARGES in front of Rhett, and intercepts his path to Maria.

We see Trevor usher Maria onto the dance floor, while his eager brothers -- Luke and Billy -- do the same with Maria's friends, happy to be dancing with wealthy Tillerson men.

ANGLE ON a listless and dejected Rhett, standing still in the middle of the bar as couples DANCE behind him.

EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Royal sits, lost in thought, peering out onto his property. Deep in the distance he sees the small flickering of...

EXT. AUTUMN'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A FULL MOON beams down onto Autumn's flickering campfire. She DANCES NAKED around the flames. From a distance we see her silhouette, circling, like some scene of tribal divination.

EXT. THE HOLE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Bathed in moonlight, we see a RATTLESNAKE wrapped around the base of the FLAG that now marks the HOLE. The snake uncoils, then slinks into the black pit... and disappears.

INT. BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

DISCO BALL -- beneath it stands a lone couple, still on the dance floor. Maria's friends drunkenly dance together, now without Tillersons, swaying to some romantic gruper track.

Perry and Rhett down two tequila shots. They now sit at the bar, drunk, some of the final stragglers before closing. The BARTENDER brings them two bottles of beer.

RHETT

... this is what I'm saying. It's 2008 man, we can't compete with those commercial assholes. If he would have sold ten years ago we could be stinkin' rich and retired!

PERRY

Man, I'd rather do something I love than be rich with nothin' to do.  
(drunken love:)  
Hey, promise me something... Don't give up on the rodeo stuff. You're damn good. Seriously! Don't!

RHETT

(interrupting)  
Nah man, you're drunk. Stop it... Alright I tell you what... I'll keep it up on the rodeo stuff if you think about moving on.

PERRY

Moving on...? Moving on from what?

RHETT

Perry, c'mon... From Rebecca.  
(pause)  
Ah shit... man, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said that. I'm drunk. I'm sorry. I'm drunk. That was a stupid thing for me to say.

A country-western heartbreaker sounds on the jukebox. Rhett has struck a chord. Perry is frozen, going to a DARK PLACE.

PERRY

I've... I... I think I'm at the end of my rope, Rhett.

RHETT

No, hey look... You're gonna be ok. Amy too... Trust me.

Perry tries to stand and STUMBLES. Rhett catches him.

RHETT (CONT'D)

Whoa there, you alright? You need to go outside?  
(Perry nods)  
(MORE)

RHETT (CONT'D)  
 Alright well go puke, then come  
 inside and we'll finish our beers.

Perry stumbles towards the back door.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAR - CONTINUOUS

A starlit and empty back parking lot behind the bar.

We see Trevor Tillerson and a DRUNK BLONDE GIRL, half naked and BANGING up against the wall. We see his pasty white ass, his pants around his ankles. It sounds like they're both about to come (him more than her).

Perry stumbles out the back door, doubled over and breathing heavy. He sees Trevor and the blonde going at it. The blonde sees him and tries to cover up.

DRUNK BLONDE	TREVOR
What the fuck?!	Get the fuck outta' here!

PERRY  
 Sorry.

Perry walks away and Trevor keeps thrusting. But then Perry PUKES. The blonde girl quickly loses interest and tears away from Trevor, pulling her clothes back on as she storms off.

DRUNK BLONDE	TREVOR
Oh my god, sick.	You fuckin' asshole.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

Maria comes up to the bar near Rhett.

MARIA  
 (to bartender)  
 Two beers please.

She looks over at a shy, crestfallen, drunk Rhett.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
 You got screwed.

RHETT  
 Sorry?

MARIA  
 Last night. Whoever put you on that  
 bull screwed you over. I've seen  
 you ride. You're better than that.

RHETT  
Thanks... Rhett.

MARIA  
Maria.

The bartender puts two bottles of beer in front of her.

RHETT  
Where's your guy?

MARIA  
I don't know... And he's not really  
'my guy'... You need a drink?

They smile. Sparks fly. She slides him one of the beers.

Behind Maria, Rhett spots Trevor out the window shouting at Perry, shoving him, picking a fight.

RHETT  
Shit. Sorry hold on a second.

Maria turns and sees the commotion. Rhett hurries out to:

EXT. BEHIND THE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Perry holds up a single arm to Trevor who is pushing him backwards. Rhett rushes out and gets between them.

<p>PERRY Look Trev, I told you I'm sorry, I didn't mean--</p>	<p>RHETT Hey hey hey don't put your hands on my brother.</p>
---	--

TREVOR  
Your fucking sicko brother here  
better explain himself.

RHETT  
Well look man, you touch him again,  
I'll put you in the fuckin' ground.  
So why don't you head back inside.

TREVOR  
(interrupting)  
Is that right? Well if you fight  
the same as you ride bulls then I'm  
pretty sure I'll come out on top.

Rhett chuckles to himself then starts to walk away. But suddenly he SPINS around and -- SLAM -- he THROWS a HOOK that connects smack in the middle of Trevor's face. His nose POPS, bloods streams. Trevor CHARGES after Rhett. They GRAPPLE.



Perry stays out of it. Rhett takes two HEAVY JABS to the gut, then delivers a PUNISHING HOOK that sends Trevor down.

Rhett turns around and discovers... Maria, standing there, having seen the whole fight. Rhett goes to her -- out of breath and a little bloodied. He touches her shoulder, with:

RHETT

Can I tell you the truth real quick?  
I'm not much to look at, but that  
guy is the biggest asshole you're  
ever gonna meet. So my personal  
opinion? You're better off with me.  
(to Perry)  
I'll pull the truck around.

Rhett heads inside the bar. Maria watches him go.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

Rhett passes the two other Tillerson brothers at a booth and KNOCKS his BLOODY KNUCKLES on their table as he passes.

RHETT

Boys.

The Tillerson brothers watch Rhett as he slaps cash on the bar without breaking stride and heads out to the parking lot.

BILLY

What the fuck was that?

ANGLE ON Luke, spotting a little blood that Rhett just left on their table. He sips his beer and drunkenly disregards it.

In the background, we see Maria ENTER from out back.

ANGLE ON Maria's SMILE. She's smitten -- Rhett's a badass.

Suddenly Maria's friends RUSH BY -- loud and laughing from off the dance floor -- and DRAG Maria into the bathroom. She longingly eyes Rhett exiting, and as she exits we see...

A splotch of blood on the back of her shirt.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAR - CONTINUOUS

A bloodied Trevor is stumbling to his feet.

From ten yards away, Perry, still in a daze, watches him whine:

TREVOR

Fucker broke my nose! I'm gonna sue your whole damn family. I'll take everything ya'll got. Your whole world will just fuckin' disappear, pal... Just like your goddamn wife.

And with that, we see an odd shift in Perry. He doesn't blink. He looks suddenly sober, statuesque, before we realize: He's about to fucking snap.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

What happened...? You too ashamed to admit she found a better man? Or did she just wise up and take off to get away from you losers?

ANGLE ON Perry wrapping his massive hand into a TIGHT FIST, quickly STRIDING towards Trevor.

Trevor SNEERS and SPITS at Perry. The gob HITS Perry's cheek. But Perry disregards it entirely and STRIDES ON towards him.

Trevor SWINGS at Perry, but MISSES.

With every ounce of pent-up rage, Perry SWIFTLY SWINGS back.

And in the speed of the moment, Perry's fist DRIVES directly into Trevor's THROAT.

ANGLE ON: Trevor's windpipe COLLAPSES. And his whole body seems to fold along with it.

Trevor holds his neck and starts to suck in air, then PLOWS into Perry's knees, sending them to the ground.

Perry FLIPS Trevor over, straddles him, and PUMMELS his face again... and again... and again.

Trevor stops struggling against him.

Perry stops. He's out of breath.

A pause; Trevor's not moving. He's a battered mess.

CLOSE ON: Perry and the terrified realization of what he might have just done...

*Breath in... Breathe out.*

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Rhett drives his truck around the corner of the bar. His HEADLIGHTS find a mortified Perry standing over Trevor's battered body. Rhett stops the truck.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Rhett hops out of the still-chugging truck, and cautiously walks towards Perry, unsure of what he's seeing.

Finally... Perry looks up at his brother.

CLOSE ON terror washing over Perry's face.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Rhett's truck SPEEDS down a long, dark highway road.

We catch a glimpse of Trevor's body SPRAWLED OUT in the back.

INT./EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Rhett drives as fast as he possibly can.

His shirt is covered in blood from having carried Trevor.

Perry sits in the passenger seat, silent and IN SHOCK.

Rhett shifts gears, speeds up.

RHETT

Perry...? Perry... I need you to  
tell me what you want me to do...  
If you want me to drive the two  
hours to the hospital, you gotta  
tell me. If you wanna go see the  
Sheriff, you gotta tell me.

(beat; he looks at Perry)

Perry?

Rhett looks back to the road, and suddenly sees:

The LONE BUFFALO standing smack in the middle of the highway.

Rhett's eyes GO WIDE -- he SLAMS ON THE BRAKES and SWERVES.

The car SKIDS sideways and comes to a SCREECHING HALT.

Trevor's limp body SLAMS against the truck's cab.

Rhett and Perry stare at the buffalo, the two ARROWS still stuck in its wounded back.

The buffalo stares back -- a knowing glare into Perry's soul.

The buffalo trots off into the looming dark. (Yet we'll see how he is, in fact, a key to this world in future episodes.)

Rhett gets out of the truck to check on Trevor's body. He reaches into the truck bed, and puts his hand on Trevor's neck, finding his pulse... Nothing.

Perry sits, still looking straight forward.

PERRY  
He's still dead, Rhett.

CLOSE ON Rhett, staring at Trevor's lifeless body, his brother's fate now in his hands.

EXT. AMY'S ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

From outside her window, we see Amy asleep in bed.

Suddenly, she begins to WRITHE. She SCREAMS. A nightmare.

Cecilia rushes in, wearing a robe, and flips on the lights.

She goes to Amy's side and holds and rocks her, stroking her hair, calmly praying and reassuring her, a routine they are painfully too used to.

EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT - LATER

Royal sits, still staring out at his land, his mind heavy, a big dip of chew in his mouth.

Cecilia comes out and joins him.

ROYAL  
Same dream?

CECILIA  
Same dream... Poor girl.  
(beat)  
Something you're waiting for?

A pause; crickets CHIRP across the dark range.

ROYAL

You ever wish the world would  
just... stop?

CECILIA

Stop what.

ROYAL

Everything. Just for a minute. I'd  
just like to know what that's  
like... Just... nothing. Stillness.

CECILIA

You live in one of the most serene  
places in the world and you don't  
know what stillness is like?

ROYAL

(chuckles, then)

I 'member as a kid asking my dad  
how these mountains got here. He  
said: God. I said who put God where  
he is? He said: Nothin'. I said,  
well is Nothin' still around? He  
said: only when there's Nothin' to  
see.

(beat; facing the truth)

I should've sold this place ten  
years ago, Ceci. I've made nothing  
but trouble for this family.

CECILIA

Well that's a lie.

ROYAL

Don't you wish we woulda' set up  
the boys a little better?

CECILIA

What, with money?

ROYAL

Sure.

CECILIA

No.

ROYAL

You don't wish I would've been--

CECILIA

No.

ROYAL

Well what about--

CECILIA

No... I didn't put up with you for forty years cuz I liked the paycheck. I did it cuz you're a man that sees the world as bigger than himself... A man that respects his land, respects his vocation, respects his wife... That's special these days... You are named Royal for a reason, need I remind you.

ROYAL

Ha... that name's a curse.

CECILIA

I wouldn't be so cynical.

ROYAL

Why's that?

And while she thinks and smiles at him, we see a tiny FLASH in the night sky above them -- that was a star exploding 20 million years ago, in a far-off galaxy where all life has now ended. They don't see it; their eyes are stuck on each other.

CECILIA

'The meek shall inherit the earth.'

She kisses him as he takes in the weight of her words.

Cecilia heads back inside, as:

CECILIA (CONT'D)

You come to bed soon enough you might be lucky enough to inherit somethin' else.

Royal chuckles and smiles.

The porch door swings shut with that clattering BANG.

Royal stands and goes to the edge of the porch to empty his tobacco spitter. He taps his cup against a post, when:

He spots two headlights far in the distance, sitting idle two hundred yards down the road, near the entrance to the Tillerson ranch.

The truck pulls forward, inching towards the Abbott ranch.

But then, the headlights TURN OFF -- it GHOSTS along the moonlit road.

Royal squints his eyes at the sight, suspicious.

It reaches Royal's driveway and we discover... it's Rhett's truck. It pulls into the driveway, but then VEERS OFF into the pasture to head towards the STABLES.

Royal turns and sees a bedroom light turn off -- Cecilia's back in bed -- yet he knows there is something here that Rhett doesn't want him to see.

EXT. PASTURE/BEHIND THE STABLES - MOMENTS LATER

Royal TRUDGES across his property in the dark, towards Rhett's truck. We follow him as he crosses the vast land.

His gait is now somehow wary, his pulse THUMPING in PREMONITION, as he continually looks back at the unlit house.

Finally, he turns the corner to go behind the stables and finds...

Rhett and Perry, standing silent at the tailgate of the truck.

ROYAL

What's this?

A pause; Royal goes to the truck bed.

He sees Trevor's LIFELESS BODY.

He looks at his sons.

His sons do not look back at him.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Royal, Perry, and Rhett speak SOTTO VOCE around the kitchen.

There's a phone in Perry's hand -- though it feels more like a gun -- which Perry is threatening to use. He sits staring at the buttons, looking like a man that wants to escape an awful dream.

ROYAL

Do his brothers know?

RHETT

No. They were trashed. We thought if we got him back to his place he would have had a better chance than anywhere else. But then--

ROYAL

Well then why is he here goddammit?

A pause; Rhett looks to Perry to speak.

RHETT

He wanted to see Amy... Before they...

But Rhett can't bear to say the end of that sentence.

Royal sits down. And his face says it all: He closes his eyes, knowing his son's life is over if he doesn't fix this.

PERRY

I'm calling the Sheriff.

ROYAL

Put the fuckin' phone down! You dial that number and all three of us go to jail, not just you. You realize that, right?

INT. AMY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We see Amy stir from bed, stand, and go listen at her door.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Perry is in shock. Royal goes to him and stands him up. In odd fatherly fashion, he begins to unbutton Perry's bloody shirt. He nods at Rhett, who looks at his own bloody shirt and begins to unbutton it as well. He takes off Perry's shirt, looking reassuringly into his eyes as:

ROYAL

(to Perry)

I want you to go wake up your daughter... and I want you to hold her and tell her you love her, ok? Your brother and I are going to figure out what to do. If anyone calls, you don't answer. If your mother wakes up, you don't say a single goddamn word. Got it?



Perry nods. Royal looks to Rhett. Rhett nods.

EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Royal and Rhett speak in hushed conspiratorial tones -- the moonlight barely showing their shrouded faces.

ROYAL

Look... there ain't a clean way  
around this... Your brother has  
been through enough... and there's  
not a chance in hell I'm letting  
Amy lose her Dad too... You agree?

Rhett hesitates, then nods.

RHETT

So what do we do?

We hear Royal in V.O. form their plan as:

INT. STABLES - MOMENTS LATER

From inside the horse stables we see Rhett and Royal SWING OPEN the large wooden doors. We watch them stride in slow-mo through the stables, their eyes nervous but resolute. Rhett holds the bloodied shirts.

ROYAL (V.O.)

I want you to burn the shirts...  
and clean out the truck...

They pass THREE HORSES, LIMP AND SLEEPING on the ground in their stalls, before reaching...

TREVOR'S LIMP BODY in the bed of the truck, now parked inside the stables.

ROYAL (V.O.)

... You leave the body to me.

Royal and Rhett's conversation continues in V.O. as...

EXT. BEHIND THE BAR - CONTINUOUS

A DISHWASHER chucks a trashbag into the dumpster behind the bar. He spots a TRAIL OF BLOOD on the ground.

RHETT (V.O.)

What are you gonna do with it?

The dishwasher follows the trail of blood until it stops. He crouches down and inspects it.

ROYAL (V.O.)  
... That's for me to know and no  
one else.

INT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Rhett and Royal wrap Trevor's body into a tarp.

ROYAL (V.O.)  
... I want you to wait in the  
stables until I get back, got it?

INT. SHERIFF JOY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff Joy watches TV in bed. We see her partner Martha, curled up and sleeping next to her.

ROYAL (V.O.)  
... and when I get back, we'll  
never need to say another word  
about it... Understand?

The phone on Joy's bedside table RINGS. She lets it ring twice more -- a rare call this late -- but then picks up.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAR - LATER

Sheriff Joy shines a flashlight, examining the trail of blood behind the bar.

She brings her light to the wall, and sees something glimmer near the dumpster. She goes towards it.

RHETT (V.O.)  
Ok... I'll be here.

Near the wall where Trevor and the girl were hooking up, Sheriff Joy picks up a shiny silver belt buckle and belt.

RHETT (V.O.)  
Anything else?

ANGLE ON the buckle, which reads "Tillerson".

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Perry sits, holding a confused and tired Amy in his arms -- a tableau strikingly similar to the night his wife disappeared.

ROYAL (V.O.)  
Well... I'm not a religious man,  
but...

CLOSE ON Perry doing everything he can to not lose it.

ROYAL (V.O.)  
... Pray like hell.

Perry closes his eyes. Silence. Then...

A SUDDEN KNOCK on the front door.

Perry and Amy's heads WHIP towards the sound.

Another KNOCK.

Amy looks to her father.

CLOSE ON pure DREAD in Perry's eyes.

Perry stands.

Another KNOCK.

PERRY  
Amy... Go back to bed.

AMY  
Why?

PERRY  
Go!

Amy goes into her bedroom.

SEVEN KNOCKS POUND at the door.

CLOSE ON Perry: *Breathe in... Breathe out.*

He slowly goes to the door.

He unlocks it.

He turns the knob, and...

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

... right where we left off: Perry's heart is beating like a drum. He turns the knob, opens the door, and we discover:

Luke and Billy Tillerson -- blood-shot eyes, drunk -- looking like they want to pick a fight.

LUKE

Hi Perry.

PERRY

Hey... what's up, what's going on?

LUKE

Your brother home?

PERRY

Yeah. Why?

LUKE

You all get back recently?

PERRY

Umm... yeah, about an hour ago maybe. Why, what's wrong?

A DOOR CREAKS -- Perry turns and sees Amy peeking out of her bedroom.

AMY

Daddy?

PERRY

Go back to bed, honey.

AMY

I need water.

LUKE

Where is Rhett?

(a tense pause)

Can we come inside?

PERRY

No I don't think--

LUKE

Maybe I should ask again: where is Rhett?

EXT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Royal and Rhett load Trevor's body, now wrapped in a tarp, onto the back of Royal's horse.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Billy's arm is now on the doorjamb.

PERRY  
He's not in here.

BILLY  
Well where is he then?

LUKE  
His truck ain't in the driveway.

PERRY  
(a beat, then)  
He mighta' said he was goin' out to the stables.

A pause. Amy grabs Perry's hand.

LUKE  
Kinda late to be workin', ain't it?  
(beat)  
You mind if we go look for him? We just wanna talk.

PERRY  
About what?

LUKE  
(a beat, then)  
You seen Trevor around?

PERRY  
Not since the bar, no.

AMY  
Daddy, I'm thirsty.

PERRY  
Hold on sweetie.

Billy peeks his head inside, trying to force his way in. Perry presses against Billy's chest.

PERRY (CONT'D)  
Hey, whoa whoa whoa -- You're not coming in here.

BILLY  
 Hey pal I wouldn't lay your hands  
 on me if I were you.

AMY  
 Daddy...

PERRY  
 Alright, look guys, you wanna go  
 look for him? Lets go look for him.

AMY  
 ... water... please?

Amy holds up her empty water glass. Perry holds up a finger to Billy/Luke -- "one second" -- then, leaving the door open, he takes Amy's cup and heads out of frame to the kitchen.

Billy and Luke stare at Amy. She stares right back. Billy smiles an evil smile. Amy slowly takes a small step back.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

We see Perry flip on TWO LIGHT SWITCHES that live on the same panel. The kitchen light turns on along with: the porch light -- a signal to Rhett and Royal.

Perry fills Amy's water.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Perry hands Amy her water, as:

PERRY  
 I'll be right back honey, I'm just  
 going to go outside for a minute.  
 Go back to bed.

CLOSE ON Amy's fearful gaze as Perry leaves the house and the front door CLANGS shut.

EXT. STABLES - SECONDS AGO

Royal sits atop his horse outside the stables. Trevor's body is now draped over its back.

Suddenly, their heads WHIP towards the house as they see the porch light TURN ON.

Royal nods to Rhett, then HEELS the horse. It quickly trots out, heading west into the pasture, towards the outer range.

Rhett heads inside the stables and SWINGS SHUT the two large doors, shutting himself inside.

CLANK. We hear him lock the stables from inside, hiding himself and the truck.

EXT. PASTURE - CONTINUOUS

Perry guides Billy and Luke out to the stables.

Luke suddenly SPOTS something on the ground, and STOPS.

LUKE

What's this?

ANGLE ON the prairie grass flattened by tire tracks, leading right to the stables.

PERRY

I dunno. Coulda' been from earlier today. Look, I don't know what you guys are thinking here, but--

Luke and Billy charge forward, now with a quicker pace, following the tracks.

EXT. WEST PASTURE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Royal rides at a steady pace across the pasture.

He looks back at Trevor's body -- the tarp is FALLING OFF. Blood is DRIPPING onto his horse and across his land.

ROYAL

Shit.

He STOPS his horse and gets off.

He tries to rewrap the tarp.

EXT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON the tire tracks ending right at the entrance to the stables, whose huge doors are now SHUT and LOCKED.

Luke and Billy stare down at the tire tracks in the grass.

LUKE

Can you open it up?

PERRY  
Why, what is it you think--

LUKE  
Just open up the damn doors.

PERRY  
If Rhett's in there, he's trashed,  
I'll you that.

Perry "tries" to open the stable doors. They're LOCKED.

INT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Rhett crouches down, hiding inside the stable next to the truck whose bed is still smattered in Trevor's blood.

We hear Perry BANG on the door from outside.

EXT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Perry BANGING on the stable doors. Luke waits nearby, hands on hips, at his wits end, while Billy searches around in the grass for other clues.

PERRY  
I'd have to go back to the house to  
get the keys.

LUKE  
No, I think we're gonna get in  
right now. Billy, get over here.

Luke begins BASHING HIS BODY into the stable doors, trying to BUST them open with his BRUTE STRENGTH.

PERRY  
What the fuck, man, quit it.

INT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

BANG -- the stable doors RATTLE as we see Rhett hiding.

BANG -- The gate-lock comes off the door's hinge.

BANG -- *they're about to break through.*



EXT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

*BANG!* -- Luke RAMS the doors again. They're nearly busted open.

PERRY  
I said knock it off--

BILLY (O.C.)  
Luke...! Might wanna come look at this.

Luke suddenly STOPS ramming. Perry and Luke turn and look at Billy, who is standing over something in the grass.

ANGLE ON a fresh pile of horse shit.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Looks like your boy might be out ridin'.

PERRY  
What? No, you fuckin' idiot, that's obviously from earlier today.

Billy -- drunk and crazed -- picks up a handful of the horse shit. It STEAMS in the cool night air.

BILLY  
(a smile, then)  
Seems pretty fresh to me.

CLOSE ON doom in Perry's eyes -- *these guys are fucking nuts.*

LUKE  
Alright... Well lets go find the fucker.

Luke urgently lopes back towards the driveway where his truck is parked. Billy follows.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
(to Perry)  
We'll be right back. Might wanna open the gates to your pasture.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

ANGLE ON a pair of Truck Nutz -- plastic testicles -- that dangle from the tow-hitch of Luke's flashy Ford F-350, hastily parked in the Abbott's driveway.

In the background we see Luke and Billy STRIDING towards the truck, on a mission.

We PAN UP from the testicles, over the tailgate to discover:  
One of their splashy ATV's sitting in the bed of the truck.

EXT. WEST PASTURE - CONTINUOUS

Royal has dismounted his horse, and is on his knees trying to rewrap Trevor's body in the tarp.

Suddenly, he lifts his head to a sound, far off. He squints his eyes towards the direction of the house, as:

EXT. STABLES - MOMENTS LATER

REVVVV -- SMASH -- Luke's truck goes PLOWING THROUGH the gates to the Abbott's pasture quickly followed by Billy SPEEDING along on the ATV. Perry stands helpless nearby.

The boys give middle fingers and big *fuck-you* ENGINE REVS to Perry as they DART past him and into the Abbott's range.

The RED of their taillights bob over the terrain and fade as they RACE out into the night.

Perry looks back and runs towards the stables, with:

PERRY

Rhett!

The chase is on.

EXT. WEST PASTURE/RANGE - CONTINUOUS

Revvv -- Royal's horse SPOOKS at the far-off sound and sight of the REVVING ATV and truck. The HEADLIGHTS BEAM towards Royal. His horse rears its head and stamps the ground.

Royal tries to grab the reins and calm the horse, but she suddenly BOLTS OFF!

Royal is LEFT ALONE with Trevor's body in the middle of the pasture.

He stares at the approaching headlights in the distance, his heart RACING.

The truck and ATV are gaining ground, heading RIGHT TOWARDS ROYAL.

Royal HURLS the body on top of the tarp, and begins DRAGGING it along the ground, RUNNING as fast as he can.

The truck and ATV are GAINING GROUND.

The BODY begins SLIPPING OFF THE TARP.

Royal looks back at the body as he RUNS.

CLOSE ON Royal's ANGUISHED FACE, his PULSE BEATING like a tribal drum, FLEEING, when suddenly...

... Royal WINCES and grabs his forehead -- the SHARP PAIN BLURS his vision. But he charges forward, EYES SHUT in AGONY, dragging the body along.

We hear the truck and ATV fast approaching.

Then out of nowhere -- CLANG -- RIPPPPP -- Royal blindly COLLIDES directly into a BARBWIRE FENCE.

He's STUCK. His skin and clothes are a TANGLED BLOODY MESS.

He looks back and sees... the HEADLIGHTS coming his way.

He DUCKS DOWN, trying to hide himself and the body in the grass. But the fence keeps him and the body EXPOSED.

The HEADLIGHTS CAREEN TOWARD a stuck Royal, SEARCHING. In ten seconds he'll be CAUGHT.

In utter DESPAIR, he TEARS out of his own shirt, and PLUCKS his own skin off the fence. Royal RIPS Trevor's body over the barbwire -- *flesh and clothes TEARING* -- and the body FLOPS onto Royal's naked chest as he yanks it towards him.

He HOISTS Trevor's body atop his now bare shoulders, holding him in a fireman's carry. He DARTS OUT across the range, FUELED by pure adrenaline, a mess of carnage and sweat.

He looks back at the PURSUING HEADLIGHTS.

But one set of lights VEERS RIGHT, searching elsewhere, while the other chases on.

Royal SPRINTS FASTER -- chugging along, his feet SLAMMING THE EARTH -- the body FLOPPING on his shoulders.

Finally, he spots the HEAVEN-PAINTED FLAG in the distance. He BARRELS towards it, faster than he's ever run. The body BOBS up and down on his shoulders.

Royal looks back and sees the HEADLIGHTS suddenly PEEL OFF to the right. A horse NEIGHS in the distance. The truck speeds towards it, as Royal now SPRINTS alone towards the hole.

He reaches the FLAG and HALTS, sucking in air.

Royal looks at the hole in front of him -- barely visible on this dark night -- then slowly steps forward.

He looks back, hesitant. No headlights.

He LIFTS the body from his shoulders... HOLDS it above his head... and HEAVES the body forward into the HOLE.

Now FROM ABOVE, we see Trevor's body flop and turn as it barrels into the DARK PIT, just before...

It VANISHES, swallowed into the black.

Royal breathes a sigh of CATHARTIC RELIEF. He puts his hands to his knees, sucking in air, staring at the ground, when...

SCRATCH -- the sound of an igniting lighter. Royal WHIPS his head to the noise and sees a FLAME, aglow off to his side, twenty feet away.

We hear footsteps approach, scuffing the dirt, before we finally reveal it to be... AUTUMN.

She stands, a coy twinkle in her eye as she smokes a joint.

A long, tense pause, as Royal is PETRIFIED and SPEECHLESS, unsure of any way out of this.

Autumn takes a long drag, then exhales.

An awkward pause, before she offers him the joint with:

AUTUMN  
You smoke?

Royal shakes his head 'no'.

She looks down into the hole, as:

AUTUMN (CONT'D)  
What is this, Royal?

ROYAL  
(pause, then)  
I don't know... I don't know  
anything about it.

Autumn smokes, then looks up at the vast STARLIT sky with:

AUTUMN

(pointing skyward)

My God, lookit that... You know anything about a Greek god called Chronus? You can see his body in that constellation, right there.

Autumn smokes, then strolls the perimeter of the hole, as:

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

You know... He carried a sickle, castrated the God of the universe, devoured his children? Ring a bell?

ANGLE ON Royal, puzzled and terrified -- unsure if he's being played or fucked with, or if she's just batshit crazy.

ROYAL

No.

AUTUMN

Chronus. Otherwise known as "Father Time". He trickled down into nearly every civilization in some form, evolved here and there... but he always carried a sickle.

ROYAL

Death.

AUTUMN

Bingo...! Not many people know where that sickle came from though... The story goes that Chronus used it to cut a hole... a tear in the cosmos, between heaven and earth... His sickle was the very tool used to separate this world from the next... To separate mortality, from immortality. And so that's how we got... Time. Chronus. Chronology. Time... Get it?

Royal looks down into the HOLE.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Don't you find it interesting, Royal, that Time and Death became the same thing? The story went on that whatever went into that hole that Chronus made was then subject to time, and hence, subject to death.

(MORE)

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

On one side of the hole was creation, on the other side, destruction. On one side was eternity, on the other... was us.

The HEAVEN-PAINTED FLAG FLAPS in the BREEZE, now looking like some dark, prophetic map.

She gets on her knees and peers into the hole.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

What else you reckon is inside this thing?

ROYAL

Nothing.

AUTUMN

So what does that mean for the fella' you just chucked in here?

A pause. Royal swallows.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Have you showed this thing to anybody else, Royal?

Royal shakes his head 'no'.

Autumn reaches into her pocket, as:

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

I found this on the ground over there. Any idea who it belongs to?

She hands him a beat-up photograph.

ANGLE ON the photo: it's a happy family portrait of Perry, Amy, and REBECCA.

Royal stares at the photo, then at Autumn.

ROYAL

Who are you?

AUTUMN

Don't worry Royal... I won't rat you out... I promise... So long as you do me a favor.

ROYAL

Ok... What.

She slowly gets on her stomach, peering into the dark hole.

AUTUMN  
Would you hold my legs?

ROYAL  
(a beat, then)  
What?

AUTUMN  
I'd like to see the inside of this  
thing... Would you hold me by the  
legs... so I don't fall in?

ROYAL  
You're high.

AUTUMN  
I'm serious.

ROYAL  
(hesitant beat, then)  
Alright.

He slowly goes to her and KNEELS at the hole's EDGE.

Another gentle breeze -- the heaven-painted flag WAVES.

Royal grabs her legs. She smiles. With her head dangling over  
the void, she SPITS her joint into the hole. It disappears.

She dips her torso into the HOLE. It disappears into the void  
and we see an odd tableau of Royal holding half of a body.

ANGLE ON Royal's wrinkled face, mulling over this dark  
opportunity, his own family's fate literally in his hands.

Royal begins to SLIDE his hands off her calves, when...

Autumn suddenly SWINGS her body up out of the hole, and  
REACHES for Royal's hand to help her out.

Royal GRABS her hand. She sits at the edge of the hole. Royal  
tries to take his hand back, but she doesn't let go.

AUTUMN  
The world's been waiting for  
something like this... You surprise  
me, Royal... I'm your only witness.  
You could've pushed me right in...  
But you didn't... Hmm... Well...  
you're better than me.

Suddenly, she YANKS Royal's arm and SHOVES HIM INTO THE HOLE.

He SLIPS over the edge, DESPERATELY GRASPING to hold onto the earth. He DANGLES over the edge.

He GRIPS THE FLAG. BUT IT'S TOO LATE! The flag rips out of the ground and ROYAL DISAPPEARS INTO THE HOLE, flag in hand.

CUT TO:

INTERIOR/EXTERIOR/ANTERIOR/POSTERIOR - THE HOLE - ALL OF TIME

As Royal falls into the hole we PLUNGE into a VORTEX OF DARKNESS that sounds like an odd hollow rushing wind. BLURRED SHADOWS. Shades of obsidian bend and combine from some deeper dimension we have no analog for -- we only hear a confluence of time and space, echo and shift, with overlapping blips and phrases (whose meanings we'll discover in future episodes):

- "... a tear in the cosmos." (Pilot)

- "She is not lost." (Episode 7)

- "I'll burn it all to the fucking ground!" (Episode 91)

- "Infinite possibility...!" (Episode 12)

- "We've heard the eternal silence..." (Episode 23,875)

- "They're coming. I assure you. They're coming." (Episode 13)

- "She is never coming back." (Episode -8)

- "It's her. Oh God. It's her." (Episode 36)

Then... VACUOUS, DEAFENING SILENCE until...

THUD -- the sound of a body hitting dirt -- and... *breathing*.

CLOSE ON Royal's eyes peeling open. His face, pressed onto the dark earth... *Breathe in... Breathe out.*

Still gripped in his hand is the HEAVEN-PAINTED FLAG.

We see through Royal's blurred, blinking eyes: ... Trevor's body, limp and lifeless on the dark ground nearby.

We stay with a confounded Royal as he tries to stand and get his bearings: *Where is this? What's happened?*

Royal stands and -- BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM -- four spotlights BURST ON, one after the other.

Royal shields his eyes and we REVEAL...



EXT. THE HOLE/RANGE - NIGHT

A HUNDRED PEOPLE, STARING IN SHOCK, DIRECTLY AT ROYAL.

We pull out to discover the people are gathered around the hole. They stand 50 yards away behind a clearly marked YELLOW LINE on the ground that spans the diameter of the hole.

From above, we see that behind the crowd are army trucks, cop cars, vans, tents and buildings, research facilities, a whole BASE CAMP centered around THE HOLE.

Sprawled on the ground are a dozen SPECIAL OPS, each with an ASSAULT RIFLE AIMED RIGHT AT ROYAL.

We troll the crowd and see a smattering of uniforms: CIA, FBI, NSA, Army, government badges, scientists in lab coats, dozens of men and women in suits. And we finally stop on:

AUTUMN, here completely different: glasses, hair tied back, dressed in a sleek suit, wearing a military clearance badge.

We follow Royal's eyes -- in total shock -- taking in the silent crowd, when amidst the masses he finds:

Cecilia who holds her mouth, STUPEFIED. We see Rhett... We see Perry... (We do not see Amy...) We see Luke Tillerson... Billy Tillerson... Sheriff Joy...

They all stand utterly stunned in disbelief.

Royal looks at Trevor's lifeless body, lying next to him.

He surveys the rifles pointed his way and raises his hands, DROPPING THE HEAVEN-PAINTED FLAG ON THE GROUND.

A terrified Cecilia steps out from behind the yellow line, and carefully walks towards her husband, tears streaming.

An ARMY COMMANDER next to Autumn looks her way. She holds up her hand -- *Wait. Not yet.*

Cecilia approaches Royal, then stops about 10 yards from him.

CECILIA  
... Hi Royal.

ROYAL  
(disoriented)  
Hi... Is this... Is this our land?

CECILIA  
Yes... it is. Royal...? Where  
did... Where did you come from?

ROYAL  
What do you mean...?

A pause; Royal looks back at the hole.

CECILIA  
Royal...

A pause; Cecilia looks back at Perry and Rhett, then to Autumn.

She turns back to Royal, weeping.

CECILIA (CONT'D)  
Royal... You died... You died two years ago... you died *in our home*, in my arms... You died... This is 2017, Royal... You died.

CLOSE ON Royal trying to fathom the unfathomable. He can't.

But we see him try: *This is 2017. This is his land. This is his family. This is the hole.* He has traveled nine years into a future that does not include him. Until now. (And soon, we'll learn what is going on, and why the hole is there, and we'll watch Royal Abbott change the course of human history.)

He looks down at the heaven-painted flag on the ground.

ANGLE ON the child-drawn stick figures of his family, now looking eerily prescient.

He turns his back to the crowd and looks at the hole...

... He takes a STEP towards the hole.

Suddenly we hear a BARRAGE OF WEAPONS BEING READIED.

A great SCUFFLE OF PEOPLE in the crowd.

A voice screams out:

COMMANDER (O.C.)  
FREEZE! DO NOT MOVE! DO NOT MOVE!

AUTUMN	CECILIA
Do not shoot! Stand down! Do not shoot! DO NOT SHOOT!	Royal! Do not move Royal! Royal, listen to me Royal!

Stupefied, terrified, shocked, Royal manages to feebly cry:

ROYAL  
Cecilia...?

*BANG -- THUMP -- a bullet suddenly ENTERS ROYAL'S LEG.*

We spin around to find:

Luke Tillerson HOLDING THE GUN.

Royal GRABS his shot leg.

Cecilia suddenly RUSHES towards him.

A MELEE OF PEOPLE SHOUTING.

Royal looks at Cecilia DARTING his way.

Luke FIRES at Royal AGAIN but misses.

CHAOS in the crowd.

*DOZENS OF PEOPLE START SPRINTING TOWARDS ROYAL.*

SHOUTING. RUNNING. PANIC.

The STAMPEDING crowd is in a FRENZY.

We see DOOM in Royal's WIDE, BLOODSHOT EYES.

Looming behind him in the HOLE is the dark past.

Sprinting towards him with COSMIC FURY is the future.

Royal goes to the edge of the DARK PIT.

He looks back at his wife.

The RUSHING CROWD nearly reaches him, when...

Royal STEPS BACK INTO THE HOLE.

He FALLS INTO THE VOID and we follow him into...

Black.

**END OF PILOT**