

INVASION

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INVASION

"Pilot"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

ON A C-130 WEATHER PLANE - SOMEWHERE OVER THE ATLANTIC - DAY

The plane is hurtling through a storm, lurching wildly, lighting FLASHING all around it. As hail POUNDS at the fuselage, peeling away the paint, we HEAR --

PILOT (O.S.)
Hurricane 2-1 to Hurricane Control --
We're five miles from the eye wall.

INT. PLANE - MOVING - DAY

A PILOT and copilot struggle to maintain control as an engineer checks their position and a NAVIGATOR monitors a radar screen. On the back deck are two stations, one manned by a WEATHER OFFICER, the other a meteorologist. Barely hanging on to the rear is a DROPSONDE OPERATOR.

NAVIGATOR
(yelling)
Four miles to the eye wall.

PILOT
Alright, let's cut her open.

The Pilot rips back the throttle, and we go

EXT. PLANE - OVER THE OCEAN - DAY

The aircraft begins to free fall, plummeting through the black clouds.

INT. PLANE - MOVING - DAY

The crew are SHAKING violently, but just when it seems as though the plane will burst apart, BLINDING SUNLIGHT suddenly hits everyone's face and the plane levels off.

PILOT
We're in. Get us a reading.

The Dropsonde Operator thrusts a sonde (a small instrument tube attached to a parachute) into a launcher, and --

DROPSONDE OPERATOR

Sonde away!

EXT. PLANE - OVER THE OCEAN - DAY

With a loud BLAST, the sonde ejects from the belly of the plane, parachuting down toward the SURGING water.

INT. PLANE - MOVING - DAY

DROPSONDE OPERATOR

Sea-level pressure's at 936 millibars.

PILOT

How fast is she moving now?

NAVIGATOR

030 degrees at 14 knots.

PILOT

(into radio)

Hurricane 2-1 to Hurricane Control...

WEATHER OFFICER

(off her screen)

What the hell is going on down there?

DROPSONDE OPERATOR

She's picked up big time.

WEATHER OFFICER

No, no... I'm seeing something else.
Something bigger. Under the water.

DROPSONDE OPERATOR

Something bigger??

WEATHER OFFICER

(terrified)

Oh, my God...

EXT. PLANE - OVER THE OCEAN - DAY

A MASSIVE VOLCANO OF WATER suddenly EXPLODES up from the ocean, engulfing the plane, and BLOWING it apart. But as terrible as this sight is, what really gets our attention are the THOUSANDS OF ORANGE LIGHTS BLASTING through this geyser, and continuing skyward through the eye of the storm.

As the remains of the plane, and it's human occupants, tumble into the abyss, we mercifully

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FLORIDA EVERGLADES - ON A MUD PUDDLE - DAY

Murky and alone, bounded by sawgrass. The puddle is thick with mosquitos, fighting to deliver their eggs against a gathering WIND. A raindrop hits, threatening to break up the party. Then another. And another.

Suddenly, THE WHEELS OF A TRUCK BLAST into FRAME, blowing our little biosphere to holy hell. PAN UP to REVEAL A GREEN PICK-UP, the words U.S. PARK RANGER emblazoned on the door. As RAIN begins to gather ominously on the windshield,

RUSSELL POOLE

Emerges from the cab. Late thirties, weather-beat handsome, on most days Russell's cool as they come. Most days. As he SLAMS the door, we catch sight of two photos -- a teenage boy and a younger girl -- taped to his visor.

Russell hustles down a long driveway toward a mangrove hammock and an old shack in the distance. Passing ANOTHER RANGER VEHICLE, he lifts a radio to his lips.

RUSSELL
(with urgency)
Mona?

MONA
(tense; over the radio)
Yo Russell. Where are you?

RUSSELL
Coming down the drive.

MONA
You got a gun?

RUSSELL
What?

MONA
Did you bring a weapon?

RUSSELL
Why would I need a...

BANG! A SHOT flies over Russell's head. He hits the dirt.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Son-of-a-bitch.
(into radio)
Who's shooting?

MONA
 (over the radio)
 Earl. He's holed up inside and won't
 come out.

RUSSELL
 Where are you?

MONA
 Gully down right.

Russell looks off. About ten yards ahead of him, lurched on
 her stomach, is MONA GOMEZ, early thirties, heavy set,
 African-American. Russell hurriedly crawls up to her.

RUSSELL
 We don't have time for this.
 (calling toward Earl's shack)
 Earl? It's Russell Poole.

EARL (O.S.)
 Go home, Poole. You're a government
 stooge!

RUSSELL
 You can't stay here, Earl. There's a
 hurricane coming.

EARL (O.S.)
 No, you can't stay here! This is my
 camp. Been in my family for over
 sixty years. Till you damned
 'viornmentals tried to run us off!

RUSSELL
 It's not yours anymore. It belongs to
 the park now.

BANG! Another shot. Russell shakes his head.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
 He must be drunk.
 (rising hurriedly)
 Stay here and keep your head down.

MONA
 (no shit)
 Okay.

RUSSELL
 And keep him talking.

As Mona looks on warily, Russell creeps out of the gully and makes his way toward the back of the shack.

MONA
(calling)
Earl? It's me again. Mona Gomez.

EARL (O.S.)
Go suck on Castro's tit, Gomez.

MONA
I'm not Cuban, Earl. I'm from
Pensacola. Pensacola, Florida.

EARL (O.S.)
Pensacola my ass. You're a damned
alien!

Russell approaches a rickety ladder leading to a hunting platform on a tree overhead. He climbs it, then looks down through a large roof hole in the shack to SEE

EARL LOW

Fifties, gnarled, staring out a broken window, shotgun in hand. A portable TV is on in the b.g. and we can just make out the VOICE of a FEMALE NEWSCASTER.

Russell grabs a tree branch and starts pulling himself toward the roof hole. This does not go unnoticed by Mona, who nervously steps up her chatter with Earl.

MONA
What'cha doin' out here anyway, Earl?
This ain't your home.

EARL
This ain't Havana neither, Gomez, but
you're here, aren'tcha?

Russell is right over Earl's head now, just about drop in on him, when something horrifying catches his eye.

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN - RUSSELL'S POV

POUNDING at the edge of the Everglades. And SWIRLING wildly above it, 150 miles offshore, is the biggest, meanest hurricane Russell's ever set his eyes on.

EARL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Dammit, Poole! I told you not to...

Russell is suddenly jolted back to reality by the SOUND of Earl's voice. He releases his grip and -- BANG!

INT. SHACK - DAY

Russell CRASHES down on Earl and the two men flail across the wet floor, SCATTERING broken beer bottles.

EARL
You got no right...

Russell SLAMS Earl on his back, the shotgun at his throat. A drop of blood hits Earl in the face. Earl focuses on Russell's left shoulder. It's riddled with buckshot.

EARL (CONT'D)
(surprised and impressed)
Hey. I shot ya.

RUSSELL
Yeah. You did.

BOOM. Russell smashes Earl in the jaw with his right hand, immediately putting Earl's lights out. Almost in the same instant, Mona bounds through the door.

MONA
Damn. Who needs a gun when we got...
(then; noticing)
You're bleeding.

But Russell isn't listening. He's focused on the television, and the PRETTY BLONDE REPORTER standing in the middle of a trailer park, fighting WIND and RAIN to deliver her report.

PRETTY BLONDE REPORTER
(yelling above the weather)
...They rebuilt after Andrew and they dodged Charlie, so folks out here are pretty confident they can withstand anything...

Mona studies the reporter.

MONA
She don't look so good.

RUSSELL
(with concern)
She's pregnant.

Mona reacts. Russell grabs Earl's gun and hands it to her.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Think you can handle him?

MONA
No problem.

Russell nods, turns toward the door.

RUSSELL
I wouldn't bother going back to the station.

MONA
Why not?

RUSSELL
'Cause within an hour, it won't be there.

And off these unsettling words, Russell is gone. As Mona pulls the groggy Earl to his feet, we HEAR:

PRETTY BLONDE REPORTER (O.S.)
Yeah, people out here think they've seen everything, but by tomorrow, they just might think again. This is Larkin Groves with the Channel 7 I-Team, reporting live from Florida City.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Where the aforementioned LARKIN, 32, is just wrapping up. WIND whips at her parka as she calls out to her cameraman --

LARKIN
Okay, Jerry -- Get some B-roll. I'll be in the van throwing up.

As Larkin fights her way toward the satellite van, her cell phone RINGS. She pulls it from her coat.

LARKIN (CONT'D)
Yeah?

INT. RUSSELL'S PICK-UP - INTERCUT - MOVING - DAY

Russell's on the road, cell phone in one hand, bloody shoulder in the other. He's steering with his knees, and the RAIN'S FALLING HARD against his windshield.

RUSSELL
Why aren't you home?

Larkin smiles. Pulls herself into the van.

LARKIN
'Cause the I-Team never sleeps.

RUSSELL
Pregnant women shouldn't be covering hurricanes.

LARKIN
One more stop at the Home Depot for a little Q and A with the stockpilers, then all of my nausea will be yours. Where are you?

RUSSELL
Halfway back from Flamingo. Doing last minute evac before this thing makes landfall.

LARKIN
It's gonna be bad, Russ.

RUSSELL
I know. Have you talked to your brother?

LARKIN
He's with your kids at the house. He and Jesse got the shutters up, and Rose has put new batteries in everything, and I guess Mariel's called a lot...

RUSSELL
Why?

LARKIN
Well -- She's their mother. She's probably concerned.

RUSSELL
I'm their father. They'll be fine. Come home.

LARKIN
I am.

RUSSELL
I love you.

LARKIN

I love you too.

CLICK. We stay with Russell, who grabs a fast food bag from the floor and pushes it against his bleeding shoulder. He then looks at the pictures on his visor -- JESSE, 15, his son, blonder than Dad, scowling, wearing a Miami Dolphins Jersey, and ROSE, 9, big brown eyes framed by a waterfall of dark curls, tightly clenching a cat named...

ROSE (O.S.)

Carlita'

EXT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - DAY

A one story cinder block, flanked by numerous banana and avocado trees. The house sits on an acre of land in the Redlands, an area popular with farmers, drug runners, and park rangers, as it borders the usually picturesque town of Homestead, Florida, and Everglades National Park.

ROSE POOLE

Is clinging to a tree stump, fighting WIND and RAIN, holding a small box of "Happy Apple" apple juice. She is cat calling in all directions.

ROSE

Carlita' Carlita''

JESSE (O.S.)

She won't be out there, Rose. Cats hate rain.

REVEAL JESSE POOLE

Keeping dry in the open garage, unloading tarps and equipment from the back of his Dad's Bronco. For a fifteen-year-old, Jesse's a good kid, but he's got some unresolved anger he hasn't quite channelled yet.

ROSE

I saw her run out the kitchen door.

JESSE

You check in here?

ROSE

Yeah.

JESSE

Under the truck?

ROSE

Twice.

DAVE (O.S.)

Hey -- Where'd you guys put the beer?

DAVE GROVES, 35, unshaven, Chevy race team cap on his head, thick gold chain around his red neck, emerges through the front door of the house. Almost immediately, he is pelted by a flying palm frond. He throws it off, shoots the sky a defiant look, then calls out to Rose --

DAVE (CONT'D)

You were stacking those cans in the pantry. Where'd you put the beer?

ROSE

I didn't see any beer.

DAVE

(uh-oh)
What??

JESSE

(calling from the garage)
Dad didn't get any more beer, Dave.
Just what's in the fridge.

Dave looks aghast. He lowers his head purposefully and starts moving across the lawn.

ROSE

(calling to him)
Have you seen Carlita?

DAVE

Who's Carlita?

ROSE

My cat.

DAVE

No.

Dave reaches an old Camaro parked in the drive.

DAVE (CONT'D)

(calling to Jesse)
I'm going to the market.

JESSE

It's gonna be closed.

DAVE
Well, the gas station then.

The phone RINGS from inside the house.

JESSE
Rose? Will you get that?

Rose reluctantly runs across the wet lawn and in through the front door.

JESSE (CONT'D)
You can't leave us, Dave. Dad'll be pissed. Call Larkin. Maybe she can get you some beer.

DAVE
She won't. She doesn't like it when I drink.

JESSE
Gee. I wonder why.

Dave reacts, striding into the garage.

DAVE
Don't talk to me like that. I'm your uncle.

JESSE
No, you're my stepmother's brother.

DAVE
Whatever. Trust me, when this thing hits, you're gonna want beer.

JESSE
I've been through hurricanes before.

DAVE
Not like this one, you haven't. I've been monitoring this demon.
(conspiratorial)
Something's not right with it.

JESSE
What are you talking about?

Dave pulls off his drenched cap. Shakes it. Looks out at the sky again.

DAVE

The storm pattern's way out of whack. These things usually take time to build, but this one's just come out of nowhere.

(back to Jesse)

Wanna know what my people are saying?

JESSE

(sighs)

Not really.

DAVE

They think the whole thing's a smokescreen.

JESSE

Dave, I really have to get this stuff inside...

DAVE

A smokescreen, cooked up by the military industrial complex, to keep us distracted while they go about their nasty business of...

Rose pokes her head into the garage from the kitchen.

ROSE

Dave? My mom wants to talk to you.

Dave looks at Jessie, raising an eyebrow.

DAVE

You'll see.

INT. HOMESTEAD HOSPITAL - DAY

We're RACING down a busy hall with DR. MARIEL UNDERLAY, 35, Cuban-American, sexy in spite of herself, and Chief of Staff at this local establishment. A number of Mariel's coworkers are rushing to set up extra beds, transfer patients, and cordon off areas deemed unsafe for the incoming storm.

Mariel is speaking into her cell phone. At her side is the Hospital Administrator, RUTH MAXWELL, 40's, dry, butch, and generally unflappable.

MARIEL

Hello, Dave. I'm sorry to bother you again...

INTERCUT WITH DAVE AND ROSE

Now in the spare, earthy living room of Russell's house. Both are dripping wet, and the RAIN can be seen BEATING down against two sliding glass doors behind them.

DAVE
(it is)
Oh, it's no bother...

MARIEL
Rose tells me you're leaving the kids to get beer?

Dave shoots Rose a look. She shrugs -- what?

DAVE
Uh, no... She was mistaken. I'm staying right here. With my...
(pulling the juice box from Rose's hand)
...Happy Apple.

Dave holds the box up like it's a dead rat. Rose shakes her head and resumes her search for Carlita.

MARIEL
I really don't want the children left alone now, Dave. Frankly, I wish they were with me. Will you have Russell call me when he gets there?

DAVE
Sure. No problem.

MARIEL
And tell Jesse to take his cough medicine. He's still not over his cold.

DAVE
Right. Dr. Dave is on it.

MARIEL
Thank you, Dave.

CLICK. We STAY with Mariel. She looks to Ruth, who's checking inventory on a clip board.

MARIEL (CONT'D)
That guy's an idiot.

RUTH
Russell's still not back?

MARIEL
No. And my kids are alone with this
person I barely know...

RUTH
When do you get them again?

MARIEL
Monday after school.

RUTH
Hmm. Well, I'm sure they'll be fine.
That Larkin girl seems pretty
responsible. At least on TV.

YOUNG NURSE (O.S.)
Dr. Underlay?

Mariel turns to discover a pretty YOUNG NURSE pointing toward
a large window.

YOUNG NURSE (CONT'D)
I think someone wants to see you.

Mariel moves toward the window -- and smiles.

EXT. HOMESTEAD HOSPITAL - DAY

Smack dab in the middle of Main Street, doing a slow cruise
through the RAIN in his Delta 88, is Mariel's husband

SHERIFF TOM UNDERLAY

Early forties, square-jawed, the guy you might cast to play a
small town Sheriff if your Sheriff was secretly smarter than
most M.I.T. grads and had a clarity of purpose unbridled by
conscience. He looks up to his wife, and speaks into the
microphone.

UNDERLAY
(over the loudspeaker)
You should be home, Doctor.

Mariel points at her watch, then flashes her open palms
twice.

UNDERLAY (CONT'D)
Twenty minutes?

Mariel nods. Ruth appears behind her in the window.

UNDERLAY (CONT'D)

Take Krome Avenue. Turnpike's already closed.

(then; to Ruth)

Hey Ruth. Nice hair cut.

And Underlay drives off. Mariel smiles. Ruth doesn't.

RUTH

Well, he's all charm today. What are you feeding him?

Mariel considers this a beat, then --

MARIEL

Me?

And OFF Ruth, actually a little embarrassed, we go

EXT. HOMESTEAD MAIN STREET - MOVING - DAY

We're in Underlay's car now, moving down the RAIN soaked street, but all of the "charm" on display moments ago is gone. The sheriff is cold and expressionless, eyes focused on the road and the darkening sky, but there is no fear, no concern, nothing at all really, just... clarity.

Underlay glances out the window. Under normal circumstances, when it's not boarded up and deserted, Homestead is a quaint place, but not kitschy. It's a real small town, more lived in than touristed: One bank, one barber, one hardware store, and one high school.

Underlay pulls into the carpool lane of South Dade High.

EXT. SOUTH DADE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

As an American flag FLAPS wildly overhead, a number of students are gathered beneath a torn awning, trying to stay dry and awaiting the arrival of their parents. Most are excited at the prospect of getting out early today. Most.

KIRA UNDERLAY

Sixteen, punky and budding beautiful, plows through the RAIN, her short skirt WHIPPING up around her. She falls into the front seat of her father's patrol car, wishing she could crawl under the tires.

KIRA

Dad -- I've asked you a thousand times not to pick me up in this.

UNDERLAY
 Couldn't help it.

KIRA
 It's so lame. The kids already make fun of me because of that time you put on the siren.

UNDERLAY
 Would you prefer the bus?

Kira sighs, pulls down the visor to look in the mirror. Her hair is soaked and her make-up is running down her face.

UNDERLAY (CONT'D)
 What'd you learn today?

KIRA
 Nothing. We had an assembly and this dorky safety guy told us that if it gets really crazy tonight, we're supposed to get in a bathtub and sleep under a mattress. Yeah, right. In case the roof caves in? That'll be comfortable.

UNDERLAY
 The roof's not going to cave in.

KIRA
 How do you know?

UNDERLAY
 I know.

KIRA
 Well, if it does, you'll dig me out right? And if I'm dead, I still don't want to be seen in this car.

And off Underlay, totally disconnected from her, we go

EXT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DUSK

Russell pulls up in the green pick-up. The RAIN is really coming down now. Jesse is still inside the garage, just finishing unloading the last of the supplies. As Russell gets out of the truck, Jesse takes in his father's now bandaged shoulder.

JESSE
 Hey, Dad -- What happened?

RUSSELL
Oh, I, uh... fell out of a tree.
Where is everybody?

JESSE
Rose and Dave are in the house, but
Larkin's not back yet.

RUSSELL
Did she call?

JESSE
Nope.

Concerned, Russell reaches for his cell phone --

DAVE (O.S.)
(calling)
Hey, I found a secret stash.

Dave emerges from the kitchen carrying a six pack of beer.
He is embarrassed to discover Russell here.

DAVE (CONT'D)
(guilty)
Oh, uh... Hey, Russ.

Suddenly, A VOLVO STATION WAGON pulls into the driveway. Out
of the driver's seat comes Mariel. She moves through the
RAIN toward the open garage.

MARIEL
(calling)
Russell. You're home.

RUSSELL
Yeah. I live here. What are you
doing here, Mariel?

MARIEL
Oh, I just wanted to make sure...
(seeing him)
Hi Jesse. Everything okay?

JESSE
(used to this)
Yes, Mom. Everything's fine.

MARIEL
(looks around)
Where's Rose?

RUSSELL
In the house.

MARIEL
Can I say hi?

BOOM! A tree branch suddenly hits the roof. Everyone reacts. Russell shoots a look to Mariel.

RUSSELL
You shouldn't be here now.

MARIEL
I just want to see my daughter. Do you mind?

Russell shakes his head, CLICKS off his phone in frustration. He's obviously not getting through. Then --

RUSSELL
(calling into the house)
Rose? Your mom is here.
(beat)
Rose?

JESSE
I'll get her.

DAVE
Me too.

The guys exit, leaving Russell with his ex-wife in the open garage, the RAIN HAMMERING the ground just outside.

RUSSELL
Are you ever going to trust me?

MARIEL
What are you talking about?

RUSSELL
You always do this, Mariel. Whenever the kids are with me, you're constantly checking up.

MARIEL
No, I'm not.

RUSSELL
I understand you called all day today.

MARIEL

There's a hurricane coming. I think I have a right to know that my children are safe.

RUSSELL

They're not your children, they're our children, and I am perfectly capable...

Jesse reemerges from the house, shortly followed by Dave.

JESSE

Uh, Dad?

RUSSELL

Hmm?

JESSE

Rose isn't here.

RUSSELL

What do you mean?

JESSE

I mean, she's not here. We looked in every room.

Mariel darkens.

MARIEL

You lost our daughter?

RUSSELL

I didn't lose her, I just got home.

DAVE

She was here five minutes ago...

Russell moves out into the driveway.

RUSSELL

(yelling above the wind)
Rose?? Rose?!

JESSE

(calling to his father)
She was looking for her cat.

Russell hustles back into the garage, leaps into the Bronco.

RUSSELL

She's probably next door at the Lassard's. Please go, Mariel. I'll have her call you when she gets back.

MARIEL

I want to wait for her.

BOOM. Another tree branch hits the roof.

RUSSELL

(with intensity)

If you don't leave now, you may not make it. Go.

Russell SCREECHES the truck out of the garage. Mariel looks after him, then turns back to Jesse.

JESSE

Why do you keep doing this, Mom?

MARIEL

Doing what?

JESSE

Pushing everybody away. Why don't you just worry about your new husband and leave us alone for awhile?

With these cutting words, Jesse turns and walks back into the house. Mariel holds, looks at Dave, then, trying to keep her emotions in check, gets into her car and drives off.

As Dave warily watches her go, he takes one more look at the darkening sky, then hits a button on the wall. As the garage door slowly closes, we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. REDLANDS BACK COUNTRY - DUSK

Off a dirt road, deep in a cypress hammock, we find ROSE, completely ENGULFED in WIND and RAIN.

ROSE

(screaming)

Carlita? Carlita??

She stumbles, falling deep into a sinkhole. Rose tries to get up, but the WIND plows her back down. She catches sight of something moving in the underbrush ahead. She SCREAMS --

ROSE (CONT'D)
Carlita?''

All at once,

A DEER

bolts out in front of her. But before Rose can even catch her breath,

A HAND

Grabs her shoulder. Rose almost jumps out her skin, spinning to discover

RUSSELL

Hovering behind her, drenched, holding a very wet and pissed off cat.

RUSSELL
Get in the truck.

INT. BRONCO - MOVING - SUNSET

Russell's at the wheel, Rose shotgun. Russell's driving very slowly, as it's now almost impossible to see through the windshield. The truck is being POUNDED by the weather, and the relentless SLAPPING of the WIPERS give this scene an eerie undertone.

ROSE
She was in here the whole time? She must have been so scared.

RUSSELL
We were all scared. I've told you a thousand times not to leave the property...

ROSE
But I had to find Carlita.

RUSSELL
No, you didn't. Your Mom and I were really worried about you.

Rose reacts.

ROSE
You talked to Mommy?

RUSSELL
She came by the house.

ROSE
Why?

RUSSELL
She wanted to see you.

ROSE
Can I call her?

RUSSELL
No.

ROSE
Why not?

RUSSELL
'Cause it's not the time.

Rose sighs. Russell looks at his daughter, sensing her slipping into that familiar place all divorced kids go when they think about how close, and yet so far, their parents really are.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
You can call her when we get back.
After we get situated.

Beat.

ROSE
Did you fight?

RUSSELL
No.

ROSE
I hate it when you fight. Carlita
doesn't like it either.
(to the cat)
Do you, Carlita? No. You don't like
it when Mommy and Daddy...

BOOM! A PALM TREE suddenly EXPLODES into the windshield. As Russell frantically spins the wheel, the truck flips into the air, and off of Rose's SCREAM, we --

SMASH BACK TO:

EXT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - SUNSET

Larkin's SUV SKIDS to stop in the driveway. She pushes at the door. No luck. She can't get it open against the WIND. She drives up onto the lawn, and parks parallel to the front door.

Using the house as a wind screen, Larkin manages to get her door open this time, but as soon as she emerges from the car she is thrown hard to the ground. She grabs her stomach reflexively, then pulls herself to her hands and knees and starts crawling toward the front door.

Though the RAIN and WIND are pelting her mercilessly, she manages to reach the threshold. She lunges for the door knob, turns it, and the door BLASTS open.

LARKIN
(screams)
Russell!!

DAVE AND JESSE

Emerge from the hall, fighting the BLISTERING WIND to get to her. Pulling Larkin inside, they attempt to close the front door again, but the WIND is too strong.

Outside, A HORRIBLE HOWL officially announces the hurricane making landfall. Larkin looks at the guys with great trepidation --

LARKIN (CONT'D)
(screaming)
Where's Russell?

But before they can respond --

ONE OF THE SLIDING GLASS DOORS SUDDENLY EXPLODES behind them in a deadly hailstorm of glass.

DAVE
(screams)
We have to get in the back. NOW!

LARKIN
(screaming to Jesse)
Where's your father?!!

JESSE
(screaming)
He went to find Rose!

As they fall into the hallway, the other sliding glass door BLOWS OUT behind them. CAMERA PUSHES through the BLAST and returns outside to begin a devastating series of QUICK CUTS around the community. We SEE:

-- EARL'S SHACK, literally BLASTED to smithereens.

-- LARKIN'S TRAILER PARK, as it becomes a deadly domino field, trailer after trailer going airborne.

-- MARIEL'S HOSPITAL, BATTERED repeatedly, as the windows BLOW out and one entire wing COLLAPSES on it's foundation.

-- KIRA'S HIGH SCHOOL, IMPLoding as the flag pole shoots like a cruise missile into its heart. And finally, we return to --

-- RUSSELL'S HOUSE, being PUMMELED by hundreds of trees. In the driveway, Dave's Camaro is lifted into the air, spun around like a top, and HURTLed toward the house. But just before it impacts, we SMASH BACK TO:

INT. BRONCO - AT THE PEAK OF THE STORM - SUNSET

Russell's on the ground, still in the driver's seat, his head cut, his shoulder bleeding again. Rose is half-hanging above him, still strapped into her chair. Carlita's in the back, MEWING like crazy. It's like they're in the middle of a meteor shower, but for the moment, the windshield, and the palm tree impaled in it, seem to be holding.

RUSSELL
(with great effort)
Are you... okay?

ROSE
(terrified)
I think so...

Russell hits his window button. The window slides open about half way, then stops, stuck in the mud. The WIND BLASTS into the cab. There is a large enough space for Russell to crawl through now, but if the truck shifts, he could be crushed. As he considers his odds, something catches Rose's eye.

HUNDREDS OF ORANGE LIGHTS - ROSE'S POV

Coming down from the sky. Strange, luminescent forms, slowly descending toward the surrounding Everglades. Whatever they are, they seem to be completely unaffected by the weather, and there is an unsettling purposefulness to their approach.

As they begin disappearing into the water, Rose can just make out what appear to be -- wings? -- at their sides. She turns to her father.

ROSE (CONT'D)

(gulp)

Uh... Dad?

But Russell is still focused on finding an escape route. As he reaches his hand out the window, a piece of split-rail fence CRASHES into them broadside. Rose SCREAMS again, and Russell decides not to push his luck. Staying IN the truck is probably their best bet for now.

Russell reaches to his daughter, pulls off her seat belt, and she falls into his arms. After a beat --

ROSE (CONT'D)

Did you see... those lights?

RUSSELL

What lights, honey?

ROSE

Out there. In the sky.

Russell follows his daughter's gaze.

ROSE (CONT'D)

They sorta looked like giant... flying fish.

Russell considers this. Not a light or a fish in sight. The only things he can see are the torrential bands of rain, circling them like a vice.

RUSSELL

Maybe they were.

(sighs)

Fish.

As the truck starts to SHAKE violently, the hurricane threatening to swallow them whole, Russell pulls his little girl close to him, and we slowly

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. REDLANDS BACK COUNTRY - MORNING

A bright, sunny morning after. Two National GUARDSMEN approach a partially paint-stripped Bronco that's half buried in the mud. They cautiously KNOCK on the window. Suddenly

AN INSANE CAT

leaps into the glass, almost giving them a heart attack. After a beat, Russell and Rose raise their sleepy heads.

EXT. REDLANDS BACK COUNTRY - IN A JEEP - MOVING - MORNING

Russell, Rose, and Carlita are in an open Jeep, travelling home with the Guardsmen. Along the way, they receive a visual damage report that is far more disturbing than anything Russell expected:

-- The roads are almost completely impenetrable because of fallen trees and debris. Cars, boats, tractors, lie scattershot in all directions.

-- There are dead animals everywhere. Dogs, cats. A deer. And there is a noticeable absence of birds. Not one bird can be seen or heard in the sky.

ROSE pulls Carlita close to her.

-- People and kids, some bloodied and bruised, are walking around on the remains of their front lawns, each trying to salvage what's left of their homes. One man in particular can be seen standing in front of a sink, water bottle in hand, brushing his teeth on an open second story. One entire side of his home has been ripped off, creating an eerie doll house effect.

RUSSELL tries his cell phone. No luck. He calls up to the Guardsman in the front seat.

RUSSELL

Are all the phones out?

GUARDSMAN

Yup. Not one tower held. Got no electricity or water neither. Everything's gone. People were so worried about Miami. Miami's fine. But Homestead, Florida City, Flamingo... All slammed.

(MORE)

GUARDSMAN (CONT'D)

Governor's already declared most of Dade County a disaster area.

ROSE

Did you see the lights last night?

GUARDSMAN

Lights?

ROSE

In the sky. Did you see 'em?

The Guardsman looks at Russell questioningly. Russell rubs his daughter's head.

RUSSELL

(explaining)

Flying fish.

EXT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - MORNING

The Guardsmen drop Russell and Rose off in front of their property. Most of the trees have been leveled, and Dave's Camaro is flipped on it's back, but it didn't hit the house, and Russell is relieved to discover that aside from the broken sliding glass doors, the place has survived remarkably well -- until he looks up at the roof.

It's gone.

DAVE

Pokes his head up from within the open hole. He's standing on top of a ladder, holding a tarp.

DAVE

Hey. You're alive. Us too.

LARKIN (O.S.)

(calling)

Russell...

Dave and Rose turn to discover

LARKIN AND JESSE

Moving toward them through the front door. Larkin's eyes are swollen from crying, and she embraces her husband tightly.

LARKIN (CONT'D)

What happened?? Where were you?

RUSSELL

We kinda got caught in a mud puddle.

LARKIN
(re; his bloody shoulder)
What's this?

RUSSELL
Oh. That was yesterday.

Larkin reacts. Russell touches her belly. Quick baby check.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Everything okay in there?

Larkin nods, hugging him again.

JESSE
(to Rose)
How'd you find the cat?

ROSE
She was in Dad's truck the whole time.

RUSSELL
(to Dave; re; the Camaro)
Looks like we're gonna need a crane here, huh Dave?

DAVE
Yeah. And about a hundred space heaters. The place is soaked.

RUSSELL
It's okay. Everybody's safe. That's all that matters.

Larkin turns to Jesse and Rose.

LARKIN
Would you guys go inside and help my brother?

JESSE
Sure. Want me to cut up some of the trees, Dad? Make some fire wood?

RUSSELL
That'd be great, son.

The kids move inside. Larkin looks at Russell with concern.

LARKIN
Mariel didn't make it home last night.

Russell reacts.

LARKIN (CONT'D)

Tom called this morning on your radio. He said she's been gone all night, and that the last time he spoke to her, she was upset because you'd forced her off the property.

RUSSELL

I didn't force her off anything. I was just trying to make sure she got home.

LARKIN

Well, the sheriff's on his way here now to begin a search.

Shit.

RUSSELL

Does Jesse know?

LARKIN

Not yet.

Russell's head is spinning.

RUSSELL

I'm sure she just... got stuck somewhere... like we did.

Larkin measures her husband's response. Senses that maybe he's trying to measure it for her benefit.

LARKIN

It's okay to be upset, Russ. I won't take it personally. And if you want to help look for her, that's okay too. Actually, I think it might be a good idea.

Off Russell, torn, we go

INT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - ROSE'S ROOM - MORNING

Where we find Rose slipping Carlita into a plastic travel kennel. Rose's pink canopied bed is soaked, and most of her toys and dolls are strewn about the room. It's Barbie's hurricane fun set'

Russell and Jesse poke their heads in the door.

RUSSELL

Hey, Rose? Can I talk to you a sec?

Rose looks up at her dad. Whenever he asks to talk to her before he actually does, it's never a good sign.

ROSE

What's wrong?

RUSSELL

Uh... Your mom didn't quite... make it back last night. So...

ROSE

She didn't get home?

RUSSELL

No. And the Sheriff... your stepfather... is on his way here now to...

Rose's eyes start to well up.

ROSE

Where is she??

Russell moves toward his daughter.

RUSSELL

(gently)

It's okay, honey. She's gonna be okay.

KIRA (O.S.)

Uh... Excuse me?

Everyone turns to discover

KIRA

Hovering in the doorway. She looks at Russell.

KIRA (CONT'D)

My dad wants to see you.

OFF Russell, we go

EXT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - MORNING

Underlay is standing with Larkin in front of his patrol car. One of his deputies, a tall, middle-aged oddity named SIRK, is hovering nearby, eying everyone and everything as though he were at a crime scene.

As Dave continues his roof work, Russell exits the house, followed by Jesse and Kira.

UNDERLAY
(seeing Russell)
I'd say good morning, but...

RUSSELL
Good morning.

UNDERLAY
(to Jesse)
You comin' with us too, son?

Jesse hesitates.

JESSE
Is it okay, Dad?

RUSSELL
I don't know, Jesse. Might be better if you...

UNDERLAY
Oh, come on, Russell. Let the boy be a man. He's as responsible for this as anyone.
(to Jesse)
You told your Mama to git too, didn'tcha?

Russell reacts, shoots Underlay a look.

RUSSELL
He's not responsible for anything.
(then; to Jesse)
You can come if you want to.

Jesse nods. Underlay turns to Larkin.

UNDERLAY
Mind if my daughter stays with you for a bit?

LARKIN
Not at all.

UNDERLAY
Alright then. Nobody's responsible, but everybody's comin'.
(to the deputy)
Mr. Sirk? The door.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - MAIN STREET - MOVING - DAY

Underlay's patrol car glides through downtown. Lots of buildings have been hit, but none as badly as the hospital. As our group passes, they take in the large emergency tent that's being assembled in the parking lot.

UNDERLAY

I was hoping she was with you, of course. I knew how worried she was about the kids -- thought she might have stayed at your place.

RUSSELL

I'm sorry she didn't.

JESSE

Did you check the hospital?

UNDERLAY

First place I called. Ruth said she hadn't heard from her.

(to Sirk)

And you checked with our people, right, Glen? No sign of her car?

SIRK

Nope.

Sirk doesn't talk a lot.

UNDERLAY

Well, guess it's up to us then.

RUSSELL

How can you be sure she went this way?

UNDERLAY

What other way is there?

RUSSELL

Your assuming she was headed home.

UNDERLAY

That's what she told me.

RUSSELL

Did she tell you she was stopping by our place?

UNDERLAY

No.

RUSSELL

Then maybe she doesn't tell you everything.

The tension in the car officially ratchets. Underlay glances at Russell in his rearview.

UNDERLAY

(end of conversation)

She was headed home.

Before Russell can respond, the Sheriff SLAMS on his brakes.

EXT. MAIN STREET - ABOUT A HALF MILE OUT OF TOWN - DAY

Our foursome emerge from the patrol car to discover

MARIEL'S VOLVO WAGON

Poking out of some Malelauca trees at the edge of the road. Two of the windows are broken and the car is badly damaged.

Russell glances at Jesse. The guys take a few steps closer to discover that the car is empty. No sign of Mariel.

Underlay nods towards a trail leading into the woods.

UNDERLAY

Ranger? Care to lead us?

And OFF Russell, hating this guy more and more --

EXT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - ON THE ROOF - DAY

Dave is hammering away, securing tarps. Rose sits atop the ladder at his side.

ROSE

You ever done this before?

DAVE

Sure. After Andrew, I did it for a living.

ROSE

What do you do now?

DAVE

I'm between jobs.

ROSE

What was your last job?

DAVE
I managed an apartment building with
my girlfriend. But she kicked me out,
so...

ROSE
You're here.

Dave shoots Rose a look.

DAVE
Gimme another nail.

She does. Looks off reflectively.

ROSE
Maybe my mom she saw the lights too.

Dave looks at her.

DAVE
What lights?

ROSE
I saw a bunch of lights in the sky
last night. Thought they might be
flying fish.

DAVE
Flying fish don't have lights.

ROSE
These ones did.

Dave reacts.

DAVE
Where'd you see 'em?

ROSE
Some by Biscayne, but most over the
Gulf. They were coming down real
slow. Like the storm wasn't bothering
them at all.

Dave's stops his hammering.

DAVE
You saw lights... that you thought
were flying fish... flying without a
problem... in a hurricane??

ROSE
Sounds kind of funny, huh.

Dave's conspiracy antenna is on high alert now.

DAVE
Nope. It doesn't sound funny at all.
(then)
Think you could show me where they
were?

And OFF Rose, we go --

EXT. MELALEUCA FOREST - DAY

Underlay, Sirk, Russell and Jesse are moving down the trail.

JESSE
I don't understand why she'd leave the
car.

UNDERLAY
Probably thought she'd be safer in
here. These Melaleuca trees are
pretty tough.
(to Russell)
I know you people are spending
millions to try and get rid of 'em,
but I can't figure why.

RUSSELL
They aren't native and they're killing
the park. Taking at least fifteen
acres a day.

Underlay shrugs. Flicks his finger at one.

UNDERLAY
Survival of the fittest.

Russell darkens.

RUSSELL
Don't the hundreds of plants and
animals they're displacing have the
right to survive too?

UNDERLAY
I don't know. Why don't you ask the
Dodo?

Sirk chuckles, but before Russell can counter --

JESSE
(seeing something)
Dad...

The men turn to SEE a break in the forest, REVEALING the shore of Biscayne Bay. Here, lying naked face down in the sand, is Mariel.

She isn't moving.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. BISCAYNE BAY - ON THE BEACH - DAY

Underlay is on his knees in the sand, giving his wife mouth to mouth. His jacket is off, wrapped around her nude body. As the other men look on with concern --

UNDERLAY

Come on, honey, come on...

-- Mariel's eyes flutter. She coughs. Underlay pulls her close.

UNDERLAY (CONT'D)

That's it, baby. Come on...

Mariel keeps coughing. She looks at Underlay in a daze.

UNDERLAY (CONT'D)

It's okay, Mariel. You're gonna be okay.

Jesse can't hold himself back any longer. He goes to his mother and kneels down beside her. Russell maintains a respectful distance.

JESSE

Mom?

Mariel looks at her son.

UNDERLAY

It's Jesse, honey. Jesse.

MARIEL

(softly)

Jesse?

Jesse takes his mother's hand.

JESSE

Hey, mom...

UNDERLAY

(to Sirk)

Call the hospital. Let 'em know we're comin'.

Sirk nods and moves off. Mariel looks up at Russell. There is an unsettling detachment in her eyes -- an unrecognizable detachment -- that sends a chill down his spine.

Jesse squeezes his mother's hand, then moves back to his dad.

JESSE
(greatly relieved)
I think she's gonna be alright.

RUSSELL
(distracted)
I... I hope so.

Jesse looks at his Dad.

JESSE
What do you think happened to her clothes?

Good question. OFF Russell, still haunted by Mariel's eyes --

INT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Larkin is cleaning up piles of broken glass. Kira is watching her from the corner.

KIRA
Is your baby going to be related to me?

Larkin holds.

LARKIN
Well... Not by blood. But in a way, I guess we're all family now.

Kira considers this.

KIRA
Our house didn't get hurt at all.

LARKIN
You're lucky.

KIRA
Yeah. My dad built it like a fortress. I actually think he likes it when the hurricanes come, just so he can prove that he's stronger.

Larkin reacts. Kind of a weird thing for a kid to say.

LARKIN
Are you close with your dad?

KIRA
Not really.

LARKIN
How do you like having the other kids
living with you now?

KIRA
I'm still not used to it yet. But
Jesse's cool, and Rose is a
sweetheart.
(beat)
I hope they find their mom.

LARKIN
Me too.

KIRA
You guys get along?

LARKIN
Pretty much.

KIRA
I would think there might be some
jealousy.

LARKIN
No. Not really. I think we're both
grateful to be where we are.

KIRA
Huh. That's cool.
(then)
Need some help?

LARKIN
Sure.

Kira moves to Larkin, picks up a large trash bag, and holds
it open for her while she dumps a pile of glass into it.

KIRA
I've seen you on TV. You do a good
job.

LARKIN
Thanks.

KIRA

I'd like to be on TV someday.

LARKIN

Oh, yeah? Why?

KIRA

I don't know. Maybe because you can help people. Like when my mom died, I really couldn't believe it, you know? Until I saw the story on the news. And even though all these reporters were going on about how terrible it was, two seconds later, they were laughing and talking about the weather, so, in a way, it made me feel better.

LARKIN

(a little unnerved)

I'm not sure... that's a good thing.

KIRA

Me either. But my dad says television's good because it distracts people from the truth. Like with this hurricane say. I mean, it's a terrible thing, but on the news, it'll just be a story, and at first the reporters will be serious about it, but pretty soon they'll be laughing and making jokes, and then everyone will be distracted from what's really going on.

By now, Larkin has completely stopped cleaning. She obviously finds this conversation disturbing.

LARKIN

And what ~~is~~... really... going on?

KIRA

(shrugs; simply)

The truth.

EXT. EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK - ON AN AIRBOAT - DAY

Dave, beer in hand, is steering a boat across miles of land lake. Rose is down front, pointing him onward. They are both YELLING above the ROAR of the engine.

DAVE

You sure you saw 'em out here?

ROSE

Yup.

DAVE

Ain't no ocean here.

ROSE

Gulf.

DAVE

Gulf's at least thirty miles away.

ROSE

Well, this is where I saw most of 'em
goin' down.

Dave kills the engine. They glide to a standstill.

DAVE

Honey -- Flyin' fish live in the
ocean. Salt water. This water's
fresh.

ROSE

I thought you said they weren't flying
fish.

DAVE

Well... I'm not sure they were.

ROSE

Then what were they?

But before Dave can answer --

ROSE (CONT'D)

Hey -- what's that?

Dave follows Rose's gaze toward something sparkling in the
water.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Right there. That shiny thing.

Rose bends over the side, puts her hand in the muck --

DAVE

Don't do that. You wanna get bit?

ROSE

By what?

DAVE
A gator, goofball.

Dave climbs down to Rose's side, and reaches into the water.

ROSE
Gator won't bite you?

DAVE
Nah. They're afraid of me.

Dave pulls up a muddy piece of metal. It's pretty beat up, with jagged edges. About the size of a bread box.

ROSE
What is it?

DAVE
I don't know. Maybe part of a boat.

ROSE
Which part?

DAVE
Can't tell yet. But, whatever it is...

Suddenly, all of the blood leaves Dave's face. He drops the piece of metal on the deck.

ROSE
(with concern)
Dave?

DAVE
(frozen in place)
Uh... Will you reach into that cooler and get me another beer?

Rose obliges, and as she does, Dave slowly lowers himself to a crouched position, holding steady on the rail.

ON THE WATER - DAVE'S POV

Just beneath the surface, wrapped in a weird, husk-like cocoon, is a completely intact human skeleton. And the weirdest part of all?

The husk has wings.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. EST. HOMESTEAD HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER - DAY

The tent is up, the NATIONAL GUARD are out, and tons of people -- HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES, PATIENTS, POLICE, and RED CROSS WORKERS, are pouring in.

INT. EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER - DAY

Underlay is moving through this chaos, talking with Homestead's Mayor, a folksy bureaucrat named LITTLES.

UNDERLAY

When can we expect the 10th Mountain down here, Mayor?

LITTLES

I spoke to the General this morning. He promised to have his troops in by late this afternoon.

UNDERLAY

And who's going to be coordinating these efforts?

LITTLES

I assumed we'd all work together. Between you and me, the Police Chief and City Manager...

UNDERLAY

No, no, no. Too many pilots, this plane's gonna crash. Why don't you let me handle things? My office covers all of Dade County. We can set up a curfew, enforce a quarantine...

LITTLES

Quarantine?

UNDERLAY

The wife's idea.
(calling across the room)
Honey?

Underlay looks off towards a corner, where we find

MARIEL

seated on a folding chair, sipping from a cup of tea, a blanket wrapped round her shoulders. Ruth is at her side.

RUTH

I want you to take it easy now, Mariel. I know you're eager to get back to work, but you can't help others until you help yourself. You hear me?

Mariel looks at her strangely.

MARIEL

Where are my kids?

RUTH

You know where they are. They're at Russell's.

MARIEL

I want to see them.

RUTH

They'll be back with you Monday.

MARIEL

I need to see them now.

UNDERLAY (O.S.)

Mariel?

Mariel and Ruth turn to discover Underlay and Littles. Underlay offers Ruth his shiniest smile.

UNDERLAY (CONT'D)

Thanks, Ruth. We can take it from here.

Ruth holds, a bit put off by Underlay's dismissive tone.

UNDERLAY (CONT'D)

(pointed)

Thank you, Ruth.

Ruth reluctantly goes. Underlay takes Mariel's hand.

UNDERLAY (CONT'D)

How you feeling, sweetheart?

MARIEL

I... I'm...

UNDERLAY

I was telling the Mayor here that you were concerned about all the damage at the hospital, and that you felt a medical quarantine might be in order. At least for the first few weeks.

LITTLES

Do you really think it's necessary, Mariel? We're so cut off down here as it is...

UNDERLAY

(answering for her)

We don't know what's come out of that building, Mayor. Could be all kinds of disease. Better safe than sorry.

LITTLES

I'll, uh... have to clear it with the council.

UNDERLAY

Of course. You do whatever you have to do. We're just here to help.

The Mayor nods and moves off. Underlay smiles, lifts Mariel to her feet.

UNDERLAY (CONT'D)

Come on, honey. We're done here.

Mariel looks at her husband with despair in her eyes.

MARIEL

What's happening to me?

OFF Underlay, taking a cautious glance around the room, we go

INT. RUSSELL'S BACK YARD - AFTERNOON

Russell is cooking hot dogs (emergency food) over a Weber. Rose is with him, adjusting the antenna on a small, battery powered TV. Jesse can be seen in the b.g., cutting downed trees with a chain saw as Kira looks on.

Dave's Camaro is prominently absent from the driveway.

RUSSELL

Dave got his car up and running, huh?

ROSE
 (without looking at him)
 Buddy Lassard came by with his tow
 truck and flipped it.

RUSSELL
 Hmm. Guess old Buddy's working
 overtime today.

Rose doesn't respond. Russell clocks her mood.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
 Larkin told me you and Dave went on a
 boat ride this morning. What was that
 about?

ROSE
 I wanted to show him the flying
 fish...
 (pointed)
 And find Mom.
 (what's really bothering her)
 When can I see her, Dad?

RUSSELL
 Soon, honey. She just needs to rest
 now.

ROSE
 Could I see her tonight? Maybe go
 back to my house?

RUSSELL
 This is your house.

ROSE
 I mean my real house.

RUSSELL
 Rose...

ROSE
 The roof is gone. It's not safe here.

Russell sighs.

RUSSELL
 We'll see.

Rose's mood suddenly does a 180.

ROSE
(yelling gleefully)
Hey, Jesse! Dad says we might be able
to go back to Mom's tonight!

OFF Russell's sagging resignation, we pick up

JESSE AND KIRA

Jesse is still sawing away.

KIRA
Hey, that's cool, huh? You may be
with us again.

JESSE
(shrugs)
Whatever.

KIRA
You like it better here?

JESSE
It's just kind of a pain to keep going
back and forth.

Kira considers this.

KIRA
I'm glad your mom's okay.

JESSE
Thanks.

KIRA
You think she went looking for Rose?

JESSE
Probably.
(beat)
It's so typical. My mom's always so
worried about everything. So afraid
something bad's going to happen, that
she makes it happen. She actually
causes it. And then everyone else
gets blamed.
(telling)
It drove my Dad insane.

Kira studies him.

KIRA
It wasn't your fault, Jesse.

JESSE

I know.

(sighs)

I just wish I knew what she was so afraid of.

And OFF Kira, we HEAR:

ROSE (O.S.)

Hey, guys -- Larkin's on TV!

BACK WITH RUSSELL AND ROSE

They are both focused on the tiny, black and white TV. As we PUSH IN on it, it DISSOLVES INTO COLOR --

EXT. TRAILER PARK - FLORIDA CITY - DAY

Larkin is back at the trailer park, standing on the front porch of a reasonably fashionable (for this neighborhood) home. The damage seems to be minimal here, but that's not the story Larkin's telling. She's talking to KELLY GILROY, hip, mid-twenties. Seated next to her is her husband, JEFF.

KELLY

When the boat came back and Jeff wasn't on it, I got really worried, but I guess God had other plans, 'cause at eight o'clock this morning, the National Guard found him about three miles up the coast. All of his clothes were torn off him, but he was alive, thank God. He doesn't remember much of what happened, but he's back and he's safe and that's all I care about.

Kelly wraps her arm around her husband. He doesn't react.

LARKIN

How are you feeling now, Jeff?

Jeff holds for a long beat, then --

JEFF

I feel like... I'm slipping away.

Larkin reacts. Kelly squeezes her husband's hand, then leans in close to our reporter.

KELLY

He's still pretty shook up.

Larkin forces a smile, then turns back toward CAMERA.

LARKIN

Well... For one couple at least, a...
happy... ending to a very scary night.
I'm Larkin Groves with the Channel 7 I-
Team in Florida City.

We hold on Larkin, uncertainty creeping into her eyes, then

SMASH CUT BACK TO:

RUSSELL, staring at the TV with the same uncertain look.
Jesse, Rose, and Kira are hovered around him.

JESSE

Dad -- That guy was acting just
like...

RUSSELL

I know.

OFF Russell, holding, we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Russell and Larkin are in their driveway, loading the kids into the back of Underlay's truck. Underlay is standing at the driver's side door. As Kira hops in the front seat, Rose and Jesse hug their father and stepmother goodbye. The divorced family ritual.

ROSE

Thanks, Dad. We'll see you on
Wednesday.

RUSSELL

Okay, honey. I love you.

ROSE

I love you too.

JESSE

Maybe we can pick up a generator
tomorrow? Get some power here?

RUSSELL

That'd be great, son. Thanks.

JESSE

Night, Larkin.

LARKIN

Night.

Larkin gives both kids a kiss, and they slip into the back of the truck. Underlay holds.

UNDERLAY

It's good of you to let them stay with their mother tonight, Russell. I know it'll mean a lot to her.

RUSSELL

How's she doing?

UNDERLAY

Fine. By tomorrow, I think she'll be better than ever.

And Underlay gets in the truck and drives off. As Russell watches his kids disappear into the night, Larkin squeezes him supportively, and we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is lit by candles. Russell is lying on the bed, shirtless, looking up at the holes in his ceiling and blue tarp sticking through them. It's oddly romantic.

Larkin appears in her bra and panties, carrying a flashlight. She holds it up to her stomach.

LARKIN

Am I showing yet? Or do I just look fat?

Russell takes her in. She looks beautiful.

RUSSELL

Come here.

Larkin moves to him.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

How did I get so lucky to find you?

LARKIN

You had a good story to tell, and I was eager to exploit it.

RUSSELL

The mating habits of the Anhinga?

LARKIN

Riveting.

Russell smiles. Kisses her gently.

RUSSELL

I saw your report today. That guy seemed pretty messed up.

LARKIN

He was.

RUSSELL

Marisol was the same. No clothes, totally disoriented... But if you're on a beach all night in a hurricane, don't you think you'd be a little sand-blasted? She didn't have a mark on her.

LARKIN

Neither did the guy. I thought it was weird.

RUSSELL

Hmm. Sounds like a job for the I-Team.

LARKIN

You think? "Beauty and the Beached?"

RUSSELL

Well, at least you wouldn't be compromising your journalistic integrity.

Suddenly, HEADLIGHTS hit their faces. Russell sits up to SEE Dave's Camaro pulling in to the garage.

It's towing something.

INT. RUSSELL'S GARAGE - NIGHT

As Dave gets out of the car, Russell approaches, carrying a flashlight.

RUSSELL

Dave? Where have you...

DAVE

(with urgency)
Get in here. Quick. Are the kids asleep?

RUSSELL
 (confused)
 They went back to their mom's.

DAVE
 Where's Larkin?

RUSSELL
 In bed. What's going on?

DAVE
 I got something to show you.

Dave closes the garage door, then pulls another flashlight from his coat.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 You're not going to believe this.

Dave moves to a trailer behind his Camaro. It's covered by a tarp. As he pulls it back, Russell is kicked in the stomach by the foulest of sights -- and smells.

RUSSELL
 What the hell is that??

DAVE
 You tell me.

There, lying before them, is the same rotting skeleton we saw earlier in the water, still engulfed by its winged "husk."

RUSSELL
 It's a skeleton.

DAVE
 And the other part?

RUSSELL
 Looks like a giant...
 (really reaching)
 ...sea anemone.

DAVE
 With wings?

RUSSELL
 Okay. What is it?

DAVE
 I think you're looking at the remains of an EBE.

RUSSELL

A what?

DAVE

Extra-terrestrial Biological Entity.

Russell holds.

RUSSELL

Are you drunk?

DAVE

Have you ever seen anything like this before?? Look at the spikes coming out of the middle of it. Sticking through the guy's head and chest like it just sucked the life out of him.

Russell sighs, trying not to buy into Dave's hyperbole.

RUSSELL

Where did you find this?

DAVE

In the water about two miles South of Everglades City. Rosie took me up there. She said she'd seen a bunch of lights in the sky last night. Flying fish, she thought. Well, something was flying --

Dave tugs on the rotting "wing" of the husk...

DAVE (CONT'D)

-- but it wasn't a fish.

RUSSELL

(with concern)

Did she see this?

DAVE

No. I went back for it after I dropped her off. Had a helluva time getting it into the boat.

RUSSELL

You should take it to the police.

DAVE

No way. They'll just cover it up.

RUSSELL
 (totally ridiculous)
 No, they won't.

DAVE
 You think they're gonna let people know that we got extra-terrestrials in our midst? On the heels of a hurricane? Right. That'll be good for tourism. Didn't you ever see "Jaws?"

RUSSELL
 Dave -- This person may have had a family. We need to find out who he is and what happened to him.

DAVE
 We will. But on our own. I want to go back there tonight. See if I can find a live one. And I want you to come with me.

RUSSELL
 Not a chance.

DAVE
 Oh, come on, Russ -- You've spent your whole life studying weird plants and animals, and I introduce you to one alien life form --

RUSSELL
 We don't know that it's an alien.

DAVE
 You got a better explanation?

Russell holds.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Maybe this'll entice you.

Dave reaches into his car, pulls out the jagged piece of metal Rose pointed out to him. He hands it to Russell.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 We found that in the same spot as E.T. here. At first I thought it might be part of a boat, but then I noticed that little number on the bottom. You see it?

RUSSELL

(nods)

It's a data plate. From an airplane. Serial number that tells you when and where the plane was built.

DAVE

Right. And I did a little research this afternoon. Guess which plane that number's from?

RUSSELL

I have no idea.

DAVE

Valujet, Russ. The Valujet DC-9 that crashed into the Everglades in '96. Plane sank in the mud and all were presumed dead. Eaten by gators, they thought.

RUSSELL

I don't get the connection.

DAVE

(revving up)

What if they were wrong? What if some of the passengers survived, at least long enough to come in contact with one of these things? Mr. bones here could be Passenger 57, and our little Eee-bee could have had him for the in-flight snack.

Russell shakes his head. Old Dave's really reaching now.

RUSSELL

You should have been a writer.

DAVE

I am a writer, you bastard. Haven't you ever read any of my blogs?

RUSSELL

Look -- I'll admit this is interesting, but I'm not going out there tonight. It may rain again, and I've got a pregnant wife in the house...

DAVE

By tomorrow, they could be gone!
Come on, Russ.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

Your daughter said she saw all kinds of lights in the sky. What if they were these things?? You may not care about aliens, but I know you care about your wife and kids...

RUSSELL

(enough)

Hey...

DAVE

You want them to end up like this guy? Abducted and penetrated and...

Suddenly, Russell grabs Dave by the collar and pushes him up against the car.

RUSSELL

(intense)

That's enough.

Dave holds, knowing he's hit a vein. So he treads lightly here. But he still treads.

DAVE

Larkin told me that gettin' divorced and losing your family was the toughest thing you ever went through. Well, imagine if you lost them for real. And then imagine that you had a chance to protect them beforehand and you didn't take it.

Russell holds, churning --

DAVE (CONT'D)

You still want me to shut-up?

And OFF RUSSELL, we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. UNDERLAY HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mariel is seated by the window, staring out into the night. Underlay is taking off his uniform in the b.g.

UNDERLAY

What do you remember?

MARIEL

Not much. I remember you, I remember the kids... I wasn't sure of Jesse's name at first, but I knew... he was my son.

UNDERLAY

We're going to get through this, Mariel. I promise.

Mariel looks at him. There are tears in her eyes.

MARIEL

Why do I feel like I'm losing them?

Underlay moves to his wife, puts his hands on her shoulders.

MARIEL (CONT'D)

Did you ever feel that way? With Kira?

Underlay takes a deep breath. For a moment, he seems almost vulnerable.

UNDERLAY

I don't remember.

INT. UNDERLAY HOUSE - JESSE'S ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

Jesse is asleep. Something is MOVING toward him. Creeping. Jesse's eyes flutter open to discover

KIRA

Hovering over him in her nightgown.

KIRA

I couldn't sleep.

Jesse sits up in bed. He's nervous that she's here -- but intrigued.

JESSE
What's up?

KIRA
I wanted to talk to my Dad, but he's
so wrapped up with Mariel...

JESSE
What is it, Kira?

KIRA
Two of my friends are missing. They
were in the Keys. On a church trip.
They went off on one of those little
paddle boats, and no one knows where
they are.

JESSE
Well... It's only been a day. I'm
sure they'll turn up.

Kira looks at him.

KIRA
I'm really glad you're here, Jesse.
It makes me feel safer.

JESSE
Why?

KIRA
My Dad... scares me sometimes. I've
never really felt comfortable with
him.
(beat)
But I do with you.

A moment between them. There is real sexual tension here.

JESSE
Why... does he scare you?

KIRA
I don't know. Maybe because...
nothing scares him?

It's only then that we REVEAL UNDERLAY, watching all from the
doorway.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK - NIGHT

Russell and Dave are on the airboat. It's pitch BLACK.

DAVE

You ever been out this way?

RUSSELL

(nods)

After the crash. Lot of park people were called in for Search and Rescue.

DAVE

Oh.

(sighs)

That must have been fun.

Russell just stares out into the night.

RUSSELL

What am I looking for?

DAVE

Lights.

RUSSELL

In the sky?

DAVE

In the water.

Russell shakes his head.

RUSSELL

I must be out of my mind.

DAVE

You're not, Russ. The Air Force used to have a whole squadron just to track U.F.O.'s. They were pretty busy too, until they lost their funding. But don't let anyone tell you that this stuff isn't real, because...

(suddenly pointing)

Hey -- What's that?

Just visible ahead, beneath the water, is an EERIE ORANGE GLOW.

DAVE (CONT'D)

You see it?

Russell nods. After a beat, the light disappears. A few seconds later, another part of the water begins to GLOW, this time about fifty yards to the port side.

DAVE (CONT'D)
There it is again.

RUSSELL
Turn off the engine.

Dave complies, and everything shuts down. The boat is just gliding now, slowly moving toward the light.

DAVE
(whispering)
What do you say now?

RUSSELL
I'm not so sure that's not a fish.

DAVE
Oh, come on...

RUSSELL
Granted, it may be something we haven't seen before...

DAVE
If that's a fish, where's the light coming from?

RUSSELL
Bioluminescence.

DAVE
Bio-what?

RUSSELL
A lot of fish have it. It's basically a life light to identify other members of their species so they can mate, or scare away predators, or...

Russell hesitates. The boat is inching closer and closer to the GLOW.

DAVE
(wary)
Or what?

RUSSELL

Or, like in the case of the deep sea
Angler fish, attract curious animals
they can eat.

Dave reacts. Suddenly, the GLOW disappears.

DAVE

Hey. Where'd it...

BOOM! The entire boat is suddenly CATAPULTED into the air,
and Dave and Russ are tossed like a paper cups into the
water, which is suddenly AGLOW again, surging and swirling
all around them.

DAVE (CONT'D)

(screaming)

My legs! It's got my legs!

Dave goes under. Without hesitation, Russell dives in after
him.

We HOLD for what seems like an interminable beat, when
suddenly - the light in the water disappears - and Russell
and Dave resurface, gasping for breath.

Russell pulls Dave to a mud bank, hoisting him onto the
shore. Dave's legs are mangled and bleeding, with
distinctive holes that could (or could NOT) have been made by
spikes from the creature we saw in Russell's garage.

Dave glares at Russell pointedly --

DAVE (CONT'D)

That... was no... fish.

OFF Russell, getting it, we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

EPILOGUE

FADE IN:

INT. HOMESTEAD HOSPITAL - TIGHT ON A TELEVISION SET - DAY

Larkin is on camera, standing in front of the hospital. The EOC tent is visible in the b.g.

LARKIN

Employees say it may be weeks before the extent of the damage can be determined, but in the meantime, the newer wing of the hospital is still operational, and an Emergency Center has been set up in the parking lot.

CUT BACK to the newsroom, and a morning ANCHORMAN.

ANCHORMAN

We understand you have a family member in there, Larkin.

LARKIN

Yes, Jim. My brother Dave got into a bit of a wrestling match with an alligator last night...

ANCHORMAN

(laughs)
An alligator?

DAVE (O.S.)

Bullshit.

PULL BACK FROM THE TELEVISION TO REVEAL that we are in a hospital room with Dave. He's in bed, legs bandaged. Russell's standing at his side.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Did you tell her a gator did this?

RUSSELL

For now, it seems like the most plausible explanation.

DAVE

It was an Eee-Bee, Russell. An...

RUSSELL

...Extra-Terrestrial Biological Entity.

DAVE

Right.

Russell sighs.

RUSSELL

Dumb name for an alien.

Dave reacts. There's a KNOCK at the door. The men turn to discover MARIEL, looking refreshed, renewed, and clear as a bell.

MARIEL

Good morning, gentlemen. I heard about your little accident last night, Dave. Mind if I take a peek?

DAVE

Be my guest.

Mariel sails in. Russell studies her.

RUSSELL

How you feeling, Mar?

MARIEL

Oh, much better, thanks. I guess I just needed some rest.

Mariel starts to remove the bandages from Dave's legs.

RUSSELL

Kids, okay?

MARIEL

Oh, yeah. Rose decided it was time to give her cat a bath this morning, which really didn't go over too well, and Kira made Jesse breakfast, which I thought was sweet. They really seem to be hitting it off.

Hum.

RUSSELL

I understand you've ordered a full quarantine for the area. Nobody but the military in or out?

MARIEL

I think it's best. With everything that's been stirred up, we just don't know what's out there now.

DAVE
You got that right.

Russell shoots Dave a look. Mariel pulls off the last of his bandages. We take in Dave's wounds.

MARIEL
Well. You're a lucky man.

DAVE
How do you figure?

MARIEL
Judging from the size of those teeth marks, that gator could have swallowed you whole.

DAVE
What makes you so sure... it was a gator?

Mariel smiles benignly.

MARIEL
What else could it be?

And as Dave looks at Russell, we

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. RUSSELL'S GARAGE - DAY

The door swings open and a HARD SHAFT OF LIGHT hits us.

RUSSELL

enters with a renewed sense of purpose. He moves toward the tarp on the back of Dave's trailer and lifts it up, revealing the rotting husk and skeleton. It's still dark in here (no electricity) so Russell pulls out his flashlight. He examines the husk closely, taking in the bone structure that might have held wings, and the numerous spikes penetrating the skeleton.

Russell then notices something even more disturbing: the imprint of what appears to be a human hand, jutting out from the husk's underside. With great effort, Russell lifts the husk and flips it over.

What he now sees takes his breath away: The complete imprint of a human being. Head to toe.

Nothing detailed, more like what you'd see if someone laid down in wet sand, but it's clearly in the form of a person, and it's directly on the flip side of the skeleton. Same shape, same size, same position. Almost as if there were two peas -- in one pod.

OFF Russell, wheels anxiously turning, we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BISCAYNE BAY - ON THE BEACH - SUNSET

Underlay and Mariel are standing in the same spot Mariel was found the day before. They are looking out at the ocean.

UNDERLAY

You're feeling better now, aren't you?

MARIEL

Yes.

UNDERLAY

The first days are always the toughest. But you'll get through it. We all do. Baby steps, honey. Baby steps.

Underlay kisses his wife, takes her hand, and leads her back toward his patrol car. As they exit FRAME, CAMERA begins a SLOW, OMINOUS PUSH toward the water.

EXT. BISCAYNE BAY - ON THE WATER - SUNSET

Here, just below the surface, wrapped in the spiked embrace of a living, breathing EBE, is

MARIEL

eyes open, barely clinging to life. She is fully dressed, wearing the same clothes we saw her in the night she disappeared. The EBE undulates like a giant womb around her, which, in essence, it is. As it slowly turns in the water, using its wings like fins, we reveal its underbelly, and the horrifying imprint of someone, or something, that was recently born here -- and who now walks among us.

Mercifully, the underwater Mariel takes her final gasp, and her eyes freeze open. Almost in the same instant, the EBE freezes as well -- its faint orange glow dying with the setting sun.

FADE OUT.

TO BE CONTINUED...

RULES, BACK STORY, AND A PEEK INTO THE FUTURE

Most of what follows is only hinted at in the pilot, but as our series unfolds, all of these secrets (and more) will be revealed.

Science fiction: It only takes nine hours to create an Extra-terrestrial/human hybrid, but thirty-six hours for the human "egg" to die.

Science fact: The next step in Man's evolution may not be Man's.

Television reality: Simplicity wins. All sci-fi exposition will be doled out slowly and clearly throughout our series so as not to confuse the audience and keep them grounded in our reality.

To create an Ebrid (Extra-terrestrial/human hybrid) the human sacrifice is taken below sea level (sometimes by accident, usually by other Ebrids) and merged with the EBE (Extra-Terrestrial Biological Entity.) The EBE is kind of half-giant flying fish, half giant sea anemone. It flies (of course), emits an orange glow, and traps its prey in the slimy spears that engulf its mid-section. After cutting off the victim's oxygen supply, the EBE penetrates the body, drawing in blood, fluids, DNA molecules - and eventually merging with the victim to form a hybrid, leaving both the original human and the EBE to die in a rotting, conjoined husk. This is what happened to Mariel in the pilot. Think of the EBE as the sperm and the human as the egg. Which leads us to the bigger questions - Where did the EBE's come from? Did some kind of literal mother ship drop them from the sky, or have they lived at the bottom of the ocean for centuries, only to be recently displaced?

Since the species has somehow found a way to merge with humans, in effect creating a super race of stronger, more resilient, genetically superior beings, they may be on their way to accomplishing their ultimate goal: Destroying humanity and taking the planet for their own. And the scariest possibility of all is that this just may be the natural order of things -- The ultimate example of survival of the fittest.

Okay. But how long have the EBE's been crossbreeding? The secret may lie in the plane crash that killed Kira's mother nine years ago. (No, we don't tell the audience that Kira's mom died in the Valuejet in the pilot. This secret will be revealed in Episode One.)

In 1996, a few years after the last great hurricane hit South Florida, a Valuejet carrying 147 passengers plummeted into the Everglades. There were no survivors.

Or so it was thought.

Two days after the crash, one man emerged from the water, and rescuers were amazed. The man was Tom Underlay. Underlay claimed that he'd been buried under wreckage and that an air pocket had been his salvation. But when doctors examined him, they were stunned to see that he was barely bruised. No other bodies were found, and no one pushed Tom too hard for an explanation -- after all, he'd just lost his wife, and it was assumed she'd been devoured by alligators. But by Episode Two, we'll learn that the real Ron did in fact die, and that the skeleton in Russell's garage was originally part of his human form.

As more of these bizarre facts emerge, Russell realizes that all is not right in his little corner of the world, and that the town of Homestead may in fact be ground zero for a new breed of "Homesteaders." If the sheriff is an Ebrid, his deputy may be as well. And what about Mariel? And the missing Air Force weather team from our teaser? And Kira's friends? Hell, the Governor may be one of them. This could explain all of that funny election business...

Though we are ultimately a conspiracy show, we're also a "blended" family show, and how this family blends in with each other, and their new neighbors, may be the key to their survival. To beat the enemy, Russell, Larkin, Dave and the kids will have to operate like the French resistance in occupied Paris. Since we will learn that children are unable to crossbreed until they have reached full maturity, Jesse, Rose and Kira are temporarily safe. Unless, of course, the Sheriff begins to view them as a threat, and then, anything is possible.

But what about infants in utero? By Episode Six, Larkin will be abducted, only to be rescued at the eleventh hour. On the surface, she will be fine. But six months from now, what can we expect to emerge from her womb? As Dave says in the pilot, Russell's already lost one family. He's not going to lose another.

Temporarily cut off from the rest of the world, and unable to trust the authorities, it will be up to Russell to save his family and his town by leading the battle against these alien predators -- and destroying them -- before they gain a foothold and potentially wipe out the human race. No small challenge, but a great arena for dramatic storytelling.