

P I N C U S H I O N

by

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NIGHT - CALIFORNIA DESERT:

A blacktop highway curls from the foreground to the horizon.

CAR HEADLIGHTS

appear at the far end of the road and rapidly approach.

The edges of the highway are completely overgrown, as though at any moment nature may reclaim the blacktop for her own. On the horizon, broken, derelict powerlines stretch off into the darkness.

We hear the whine of a car's engine as the headlights near us... then VOICES... they have a faint electronic ring, as though talking over an intercom or radio of some kind...

MARY (vo)
Anything on the scope?

TOMMY (vo)
No... wait...

The car is a small station wagon painted a dull black. Its rear quarter windows are crudely covered with sheet metal and rivets. It has large off-road tires and is completely stripped of decoration and frill.

The car whips by us in a WHOOSH...

CAR INT

Two people... with no passenger seat, no carpeting and little comfort. The driver is MARY. She's about thirty-five, short-cropped red hair.

The other is TOMMY, ten years older, his face weathered and scarred, a patch over one eye. He sits in the rear in a swiveling chair, facing the back of the car. There's a computer screen and a keyboard in front of him.

They talk above the roadnoise through lightweight headsets.

MARY
What is it?

TOMMY
Kill the lights and slow down!

POV - THROUGH WINDSHIELD - MOVING

MARY
What do you got?

TOMMY

I don't know... something in the road
up ahead.

Mary slows the car... In a moment we see a fire up the road a
little. It gets larger as we approach. It's a burning car.

MARY

You know it?

CAR INT

as it slows to a stop.

TOMMY

Fred Maywood's got a hardtail Ford
like that... found it in a ravine up
in the valley...

MARY

We better take a look.

TOMMY

Whose turn is it?

MARY

Yours... Check environment.

Tommy spins and clacks at his keyboard. He studies the screen
for a moment.

TOMMY

...trace of radiation... probly
natural. Airborne, we got small
levels of Turner's spore, carbon
monoxide... some neo-oxides... all
breathable.

Tommy climbs up out of the back of the car and out through the
passenger door.

TOMMY

...sometimes I think it'd be worth
dying from plague... just to stay
outta that detox room.

Mary undoes the bolts on a roof hatch... a rough hole with a
plywood lid.

CAR EXT

She stands up through the hole and drags up a large shotgun.
She primes it with a snap of her elbow.

TOMMY

I hate all that pokin' and scrubbin'
...and the topical is the most dis-
gustin'...

Mary smiles at Tommy. She looks around, the gun ready.

Tommy approaches the car. It's nose is pointed down an embankment. He gingerly steps down the slope.

TOMMY

Hell I don't think this is Freddy's
rig.

CLOSE ON MARY

about to speak, when we hear another voice...

VOICE

Just hand me that gun.

Mary's head snaps at the sound of the STRANGER.

POV

She finds herself looking down the barrel of an old, large revolver. It's held by a tall, GAUNT MAN in his late forties. He has the tired all-too-human face of a dust-bowl survivor.

She hands him the shotgun.

GAUNT MAN

We were just about ready to give up.
James! Bring him back over here.

WIDE

JAMES is a large man with an enormous, misshapen head. He has an old rifle pointed at Tommys back as they walk towards Marys' car.

JAMES (thickly)

We ain't gonna hurt nobody. Just be
quiet and we ain't gonna hurt nobody.

GAUNT MAN (to Mary)

Get down and open the back... James,
get the car outta the ditch and get
it up here...

Mary climbs down off the roof and moves to the back of the car. The stranger wraps his arm around Tommys neck and holds the gun at his head.

Mary unbolts the rear hatch and swings it open.

GAUNT MAN

What're ya carrying tonight, friend?

MARY

I don't know... We don't worry about that...

Inside is a long flat shipping case. It's made of fiberglass, heavily reinforced. Mary pulls it out.

GAUNT MAN

Is it vaccine?

MARY

I don't know... We don't... We're just delivering it...

James pulls the other car next to them. It's worn and battered, the paint burned and scarred. Whatever fire there was seems to have been minor... a fake. James hops out...

Mary hands the case to him.

GAUNT MAN

We'll take that can a gas too...

Mary reluctantly unbolts a metal gas can from the back of the car and hands it to James.

GAUNT MAN

...In the car, James.

James circles the car and climbs into the passenger seat.

The gaunt man pushes Tommy in front of him, towards Mary, and climbs into the drivers' side of his car.

He waves the gun through the window.

GAUNT MAN

You folks can go now...

Tommy and Mary move slowly around their car and climb inside.

TOMMY (whispering)

Let's get outta here...

Mary revs up the engine and turns and looks at the stranger. He addresses her softly, as though she were a child...

STRANGER (to Mary)

I'm sorry 'bout this... but I wanna
live as much as the next man...

(a pause)

G'wan... go home... I hope your boss
understands...

Mary pulls the car slowly down the road.

INT. GAUNT MAN'S CAR

The man turns around to James, who has the case on his lap.

STRANGER

What do we got?

JAMES

Food I hope...

INT. MARY'S CAR

Tommy's moving around, frantically climbing out of his
coveralls as Mary accelerates down the road.

MARY

Did you check levels?

TOMMY

I'm workin' on it...

There's a loud BEEPING SOUND.

TOMMY

...Shit, I got it all over me!!

They are fifty feet down the road from the other car. Tommy
pulls open a window and chucks out gloves, mask, and coveralls.

TOMMY

...I knew they were dirty. I swear to
God every time I step outta this car
I get burned!

INT OTHER CAR

James pulls at the clips on the packing crate. The gaunt man
leans over his seat to watch.

The box won't come open.

STRANGER

...just pull the latchpin on top
there...

JAMES

I can do it!

As he pulls the lid open the box EXPLODES in a white hot FLASH...

INT MARYS CAR - MOVING

The strangers' car BURSTS into flames in the rear window. Mary, in the foreground stares straight ahead. Tommy is turned full around, staring at the raging fire.

TOMMY

Damn... that was a good one.

MARY

We don't make any money blowing things up.

TOMMY

You gotta admit it's fun though...

CLOSE: MARY

finally looks up into her rear view mirror at the fire.

MARY

(in a whisper, to herself)
Hell... they were dyin' anyway.

THE BURNING FIRE

It's as hot and loud as a blast furnace as it destroys the car and all it's contents.

CUT TO:

HIGH AND WIDE ON ROAD

Mary's car speeds down the broken highway and into the night.

CUT TO:

A PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A man in a suit, tie, and trenchcoat, walks slowly under a lone, bent streetlight. He is CHARLES SHEPARD.

The parking lot is cracked and rotting, with occasional clumps of desperate grass punching through the blacktop.

We see a battered sign with missing letters hanging on a large, decrepit building. It says "RAN HO RI JA M LL".

Shepard approaches the building and finds a small side door. He knocks and waits.

A tiny green light above the door flashes.

SHEPARD

The mountain looms over the smoking rubble and my heart longs for home.

The green light goes out and the door CLUNKS open. SHEPARD steps inside.

CUT TO:

DESERT - NIGHT: MARY'S CAR

is stopped in the middle of an empty road. Above it, suspended on rotting wires, an ancient stoplight swings gently in the breeze.

Tommy and Mary stand on opposite sides of the car.

Mary kicks the car violently three times. The sheet metal RATTLES and RINGS in response.

TOMMY

Now cut that out! You think that's gonna help? Bad energy!

MARY

C'mon, the third time this week!

Tommy strides around to the front of the car and lifts the hood.

TOMMY

Some of the parts in this car are forty years old. ...you should treat it with respect!

MARY

Your computer's supposed to tell us when something's gonna go wrong.

TOMMY

The computer says everything's okay.

MARY

Everything's okay, but the car stopped.

TOMMY

I'm workin' on it!

Tommy's working inside the engine compartment. He has a string of wires pulled out.

TOMMY (contd)

I just wish you had some respect for technology...this car is an antique you know...damn few of 'em left... and if the Cross had it's way, there'd be exactly none...automobiles would go the way of sex and fresh fruit.

Mary leans against the car and looks off down the road. A light flickers on her face.

MARY

Tommy.

TOMMY

I'm gettin' it, gimme...

MARY

Tommy, someone's comin'.

Tommy peeks around the hood and looks. Light flickers on his face.

POV

Distant headlights on the road moving straight at them.

TOMMY

Try it...

CAR INT

Mary jumps into the car and hits the starter.

The dashboard lights come up but there's only a CLICKING sound... the engine doesn't turn.

MARY

Tom...

EXT CAR

Tommy is buried in the engine box. He peeks over the hood... the lights brighten on his face.

TOMMY

I got the ignition up but the starter's jammed... We gotta jump it.

Mary climbs out of the car. Tommy slams the hood and runs around the back.

They both lean heavily against the car's mass, pushing it forward... away from the oncoming headlights. Their bodies stretch out almost parallel to the ground. The car crawls along...

THE HEADLIGHTS

brighten... we begin to hear the dull ROAR of the onrushing vehicle.

TOMMY

looks over his shoulder...

POV

The lights are only a few hundred yards away. Suddenly they brighten intensely... other lights on the vehicle FLASH ON!

TOMMY

It's the Cross!

MARY

is now running alongside the car. She pulls open the drivers side door... she throws her feet forward and dives inside...

THE HEADLIGHTS

rush forward... we see a flashing cherrytop... on a big TRUCK. Enormous... ROARING... master of the road. A Red Cross symbol marks the side. SEARCHLIGHTS swing off the back and onto Mary's car. A SIREN wails...

INT CAR: MARY

jams the stickshift into gear.

EXT: TOMMY

runs, panting, his hands flat against the back of the car.

THE ONRUSHING TRUCK

fifty yards away... Its blaring, flashing lights fill the road.

THE DRIVE WHEELS

jerk and skid.. the engine spins... no ignition....

MARY

rams at the gas... Her hair is haloed in the bright backlight.

MARY

Fuck!

THE HEADLIGHTS

fill the frame. The truck engine ROARS.

WIDE

The two vehicles are only sixty yards apart. Tommy's running hard... caught in between...

MARY

pumps the clutch again...

EXT

The wheels grab and turn. A ball of smoke bursts from the exhaust pipe. The car jerks as the ignition catches... it pulls forward... just a few yards ahead of the speeding truck.

Tommy dives at the back of the car and grabs hold of the roof... he pulls himself up and pounds with his fist...

TOMMY

Go Go Go!!!

INT: MARY

jams at the gears and fires the car ahead of the truck.

B-B-B-B-BAM BAM! There's a burst of machine gun fire...

EXT

Mary's car accelerates rapidly and puts on a little distance...

Tommy crawls madly for the roof hatch.

The machine gun BURSTS loudly... then begins to fade as the distance between the two vehicles increases...

The big truck slows...unable to catch the smaller, quicker car.

CUT TO:

DETOX ROOM - GARAGE

A white tile room. TIM BLORE strides heavily through the steam. He is fat, about fifty.

We see showers in the background. A few shrouded workers hose down the floor. Blore stops in a doorway.

POV

A pink, well scrubbed, Charles Shepard, is pulling on a set of white coveralls.

TIM

Mr. Shepard?

SHEPARD

Doctor... Charles Shepard, Red Cross.
ID rank twenty seven.

TIM

Tim Blore. No number...

No hands are offered. Tim steers Shepard out of the room.

TIM

I hope detox didn't treat you too rough, Doctor Shepard. It's not often my staff gets a visit from the enemy.

HALLWAY - MOVING

We follow Tim and Shepard down a long, dark hall.

SHEPARD

I don't consider---

TIM

---they're good people, Doctor... and they've got something in common with you...

SHEPARD

What could that be?

TIM

They hate the plague, Doctor... they hate the plague...

They reach a corner and Tim guides Shepard around it...

REPAIR SHOP - TRACKING

on Tim and Shepard as they walk down a line of partially assembled cars and trucks...

SHEPARD

Mister Blore... This must seem strange... my coming to you...

Tim smiles and shakes his head...

TIM

I truly cannot imagine what the Cross would want from a "plague carrier" like me... isn't that what you call us... "carriers"?

SHEPARD

I'm not here to make trouble Mister Blore... I need your help.

Tim stops in the middle of the floor and stares Shepard directly in the eye.

TIM

As of this morning I have ten cars on the road... a year ago I had thirty five. Five years ago I had a hundred and ten. One hundred and eighty three of my recent employees are dead. Shot down, burned out, hanged... you know why, Mister Shepard?

SHEPARD

Doctor...

TIM

...because the Red Cross shut down the borders... sealed the city and state lines to non-Cross personnel---

SHEPARD

---to stop the spread of disease!

TIM

---to cut off the free market... to freeze out the other medical groups... to starve everyone who chose not to live under the Crosses thumb. But closing roads didn't cure anybody. It just cut out anyone who didn't see eye to eye with the Red Cross way of doin' things.

SHEPARD

I didn't come here to defend--

BLORE

--Why did you come here?

SHEPARD

I have a... package. I need to move it quickly and quietly...

TIM

I can do that... for a price.

SHEPARD

I'll pay you whatever it takes!

Blore waits for Shepard to go on.

SHEPARD

Do have access to an airplane?

TIM (laughing)

A plane? You gotta be shittin' me--

SHEPARD

I'm just--

TIM

--the ozone's shot...go up during the day and you'll fry in the ultraviolet. Even low grade fuel is scarce, anything you could afford to get airborne'd be too slow to jump radar. No...the safest way to get anything anywhere is on the ground, at night... by car.

CUT TO:

MARY'S CAR - EXT NIGHT - MOVING

We see the broken sign, "RAN HO RI JA M LL".

MARYS POV

She downshifts expertly as she turns the car into the abandoned parking lot. She revs the engine and speeds the car along a smooth well-worn stretch of tar.

INT CAR

Tommy presses a few buttons and speaks into his mike.

TOMMY

Zero Base, this is Beta Whiskey Two
Three... uh...

He pulls a slip of paper out of his shirt pocket.

CAR EXT

Mary steers the car into an underground entrance. She snaps the car smartly around concrete barricades... It's an old parking garage...

Tommy reads unsurely, like a third grader:

TOMMY

"The mountain looms over the smoking
rubble and my heart longs for home".

(to Mary)

Where the hell do they get these
things?

MARY

You're supposed to memorize 'em...

TOMMY

Every time I get to know the damn
things they change 'em...

Mary pulls the car up in front of a large set of corrugated doors.

CUT TO:

INT GARAGE:

The big doors roll up as Mary pulls the car inside.

Quickly, the car is surrounded by people in white coveralls. They wear surgical masks, tight bonnets over their hair, rubber boots and rubber gloves...

One begins to hose the car down with steaming water. Another scrubs the car with a brush on a long pole. A third moves what looks like a metal detector over the surface of the car.

Mary and Tommy climb out and we get a better look at them both. Tommy is short, with a pronounced limp. His hands and face are coarse and scarred. With his eyepatch, he looks like a swabby out of some old pirate movie. In contrast, Mary is tall, handsome and athletic. They both wear gloves, boots, and worn grey coveralls.

They walk around the back of the car. Mary unlatches the hatch and swings it up.

TOMMY

Damn, I hope fuckin' Ruth isn't runnin' Detox tonite... she's got a way with a brush't makes brave men weep...

INSIDE HATCH

Tommy and Mary unbolt part of the floor and lift off the cover. Inside is another shipping case identical to the one we saw before.

ON MARY AND TOMMY - MOVING

MARY

C'mon, Ruth's alright.

TOMMY

The woman hates me...

They each grab an end of the case and carry it toward a nearby door.

TOMMY

(to one of the masked technicians)
Smitty... hey, Smitty! Who's on Detox?
Who's on detox tonite?

The technician doesn't respond. We TRACK behind Tom and Mary.

MARY

I don't think that's Smitty.

TOMMY

They oughtta put numbers on their backs or somethin'.

DISPATCHERS OFFICE:

PAUL, sits behind a small glass window... He wears a headset and sits at a computer terminal...

There are blinking computer screens everywhere around his room. The walls are covered with maps and notes. Radio transmissions fill the air.

When Mary and Tommy enter the room a loud ALARM horn blasts. Paul hits a button and the alarm stops. He talks to them over an intercom.

PAUL

Man, you guys are dirty...

Mary and Tommy heave the case onto a moving conveyor belt. It disappears into a hole in the wall.

MARY

Had some trouble Paul.

PAUL

So I gather.

MARY

Lost my gun and 20 liters of diesel.

Paul stares at Mary a second, then scribbles with a pencil.

MARY

I need an advance, Paulie...

PAUL

Fourteen forty per liter... that's two eighty eight. Less your hundred for the run... What you got in the tank?

TOMMY

Twenty-one-oh-eight.

Paul taps at a calculator.

PAUL

You owe me one-eighty-one-sixty-eight.

MARY

Lend me a hundred.

PAUL

Can't do that.

MARY

You got your package, man!

PAUL

Talk to Tim about it, he wants to see you anyway.

Mary grunts and scowls at Paul. She turns to Tommy.

MARY

Can you wait a couple of days, Tom?

Tommy waves the question away.

TOMMY

Hey Paulie, who's on detox?

Paul scratches his head a moment and points behind Tommy. Tommy and Mary turn around.

POV

A figure stands in the doorway. It's a large female wearing a huge gas mask. She carries a long, narrow scrub brush in her hand. It's RUTH...

TOMMY

Oh, no...

Ruth walks up to Tommy and clamps a big fist on his shoulder. Mary laughs out loud.

RUTH (muffled)

Don't worry about a thing...

CUT TO:

TIMS' OFFICE

Mary bursts through the door... She's changed into fresh coveralls... her hair's wet.

MARY

Tim, you gotta do something about Paulie, shit...

TIM

Mary... this is Doctor Shepard. He works for the Red Cross...

Mary stops and stares at Shepard.

MARY

The Cross? Who let him in here?

TIM

I did. He wants you to take a ride for 'em, Mare... tonight.

MARY

I don't work for the government.

SHEPARD

The Red Cross is not the government.

MARY

Coulda fooled me.

TIM

State your case, Shepard.

SHEPARD

We need to get a package to Salt Lake City.

MARY

I'm not goin' anywhere for you.

Shepard takes a breath...

SHEPARD

Have you heard of DNV 47X toxemia?

MARY

Ultraplague.

Shepard nods.

SHEPARD

...then you know that this particular strain of plague is exceptionally contagious... it's infected Saint Louis, Chicago. We haven't had a radio signal from New York in almost two months... and last week seventeen cases were discovered in Salt Lake...

MARY

All the more reason for me to stay right here.

SHEPARD

...and ordinarily I'd call that a wise choice... but this disease is obviously, relentlessly heading west, straight for us.

MARY

So whattya want me to do about it?

SHEPARD

Get my package to Salt Lake. I'm a molecular biologist... a geneticist... and I think I've found a way to stop the plagues...

There's a pause as this sinks in.

MARY

Are you kiddin'?

SHEPARD

I'm dead serious.

MARY

Then why don't you go?

SHEPARD

It's become apparent that my superior has no interest in my work ever leaving the lab. My only choice is to go outside the Cross.

MARY

No one other than Red Cross personnel has gotten across the Nevada border in two years.

SHEPARD

Mister Blore seems to think you're the driver with the best chance...

Mary looks at Tim. Tim shrugs.

TIM (to Mary)

I'll get you ten thousand cash on arrival in Salt Lake... I'll front you gas and supplies... Split anyway you like with Tommy.

MARY (to Shepard)

That's a lot of money. What exactly is it you need moved?

SHEPARD

I thought you people didn't ask that question... I thought you just took the money and minded your own business.

Mary frowns and turns to the door. She swings it open and steps half way out...

MARY

Look... there isn't anything I won't carry... alcohol, vaccine, heroine, toothpaste, explosives... whatever you want... as long as there's a payday at the end. But I gotta play the odds... and yours are lousy... No amount a money's worth dying for.... not this or any other job.

SHEPARD

(suddenly, forcefully)

But death is near... for all of us.

Mary stops and looks at Shepard.

SHEPARD

If I fail to get my work across the desert... I promise... within a year... you and every one you know will be dead at the hands of Ultra-plague.

MARY

...and what about you?

SHEPARD

I doubt very much I'll last that long... not once Number One finds out I've been here.

TIM

Number One...? Spoor?

SHEPARD

That's right. Captain Doctor Alwin Spoor...

Mary pauses, shakes her head, and leaves.

CUT TO:

REPAIR SHOP

Tommy and a mechanic, LEO, are going over Mary's car. Mary arrives, waves at Tommy and approaches Leo.

MARY

Well?

LEO

Gonna have to restring the wiring harness.

MARY

So what're we talkin'?

LEO

Five large.

MARY

Come on!

LEO

It ain't easy to find parts, Mare... I got overhead!

Mary breathes a long sigh...

MARY

But... you can wait right?

LEO

You owe me four for the brakes already...

Mary stares at the ground...

MARY (she sighs)

I guess...

(shaking her head)

...maybe Tim...

LEO

I put Sidney and Jeff on it... only keep you in one night.

Tommy moves over as Leo leaves...

TOMMY

I hear Tim's got a big run for us.

MARY

A fuckin' suicide mission's what I'd call it... Salt Lake City... I turned it down.

TOMMY

Utah?

MARY (nodding)

Nobody's even tried the border since Ben Grady died.

Tommy pauses, and leans heavily on the side of the car.

TOMMY

...well... shit... whatsit pay?

MARY

Ten thousand...

Tommy whistles... and smiles.

MARY

...which means exactly nuthin' to a dead man.

Tommy purses his lips and looks at the floor.

TOMMY

I been thinkin' a lot about the borders lately.

MARY (suspiciously)

You thinkin' we could get across?

TOMMY

Maybe. I got some ideas...

Mary stares at Tommy... confused. Tim appears across the room and waves at her. She turns and starts towards him.

TOMMY (calling)

Just so you understand... I'm votin' yes...

MARY

(over her shoulder)

You don't get a vote.

TOMMY

Well, let me put it this way...

Tommy starts to smile as Mary stops and looks at him.

TOMMY

...I'd rather die from a bullet than die from plague.

CUT TO:

GARAGE HALLWAY - INT DAY

Tim leans up against a wall as Mary joins him.

MARY

I'm gonna need another loan Tim... If you keep me on the penicillin run outta Barstow... I think I can get it back to you the end of the month.

Tim looks at the ceiling and stares at a crack.

TIM

I already offered you a solution to your financial problems... all you gotta do is drive to Salt Lake... Ten grand plus I'll take care of what you owe Paul and Leo.

MARY

...and I said no... but I need you to lend me a thousand.

TIM

I don't think I can do that Mary.

There's a long pause. They stare at one another.

TIM

What'd Tommy say? He'd like a crack at the wire, wouldn't he?

Mary looks at Tim. Tim smiles, turns and starts away.

TIM

His cargo's got a limited storage life... you'll have to move fast. I'll tell Leo to set you up.

CUT TO:

TIM'S OFFICE - DAY

Paul, Tim, Mary, and Tommy lean over a large map of the western United States... It's tattered and frayed.

CLOSE ON MAP

Paul traces the two long, straight state borderlines with a finger...

PAUL

Both the California-Nevada and the Nevada-Utah borders are completely fenced. Twelve millimeter stainless steel cable. Rows of three. Straight up and down both borders. Sixty thousand watts in thousand amp bursts...

TOMMY

Leo and me been cookin' up a little item... a bolt cutter hooked to a ceramic/titanium passive ballast... sort of a mega heat-sink. We got the core out of an old dynamo up near Edwards last week. 'Course we haven't had time to test it...

Tim's fat hands reach in and describe the route...

TIM

You stay off the main roads, the best way looks like Death Valley... that's the first wire... then north of Vegas, across the prairie up to the edge of the Salt Desert. Then cut the border and shoot straight across the salt flats.

CUT TO:

GARAGE HALLWAY - MOVING

Paul and Tim chase Mary and Tommy down a long hall.

PAUL

You make the pickup and hide out in the Sierras until sunset tomorrow. Then drop down and cut the Nevada line. I'll try and find a short, clean route.

TIM

The Cross'll probably chase you with F-tens... they're fast but they need to be refueled often...

INT GARAGE - MOVING

Tommy and Mary enter the garage followed by Paul and Tim.

Mary's car is surrounded by Leo and his crew.

TIM

You can't match them for speed... but you can carry enough fuel to get you there...

MARY

...and the ride back?

Mary and Tommy climb inside the car. Tim hesitates a moment.

TIM

I'll try and have some diesel ready for a return.

MARY

See if you can find something cleaner than the sludge you been sellin' me lately.

The technicians shut the hood and spread out.

Mary revs up the car and gives a thumbs up sign to one of the techies. The big garage door starts to travel up.

Tim slaps the side of the car and grunts.

TIM

Hurry back.

Mary looks at Tim, smiles reluctantly, and nods...

INT CAR

MARY

Ready?

TOMMY

Let's do it.

Mary slaps the stickshift into gear.

THE CAR

squeals on the pavement and bursts out the big door. Paul and Tim are left standing in the big garage. Paul waves at the technician to bring down the door.

PAUL

You want me to start lookin' for fuel out of Utah? Guy I used to work for...

TIM

Don't bother... I'd be surprised if they make the Nevada borderline.

THE GARAGE DOOR

slams shut with a BANG as we...

CUT TO:

MARYS CAR - ON ROAD - MOVING - NIGHT

It WHOOSHES down a smooth stretch of highway.

CUT TO:

CHAIN LINK FENCE - EXT NIGHT

A pair of guards stands silently before a tall barbed wire gate. A single floodlight lights the area.

Mary's car creeps quietly into the foreground.

INT CAR

MARY

You set?

Tommy unbolts a machine rifle from under his seat.

TOMMY

Yeah...

MARY

Environment?

Tommy checks his screen.

TOMMY

It's okay.

Tommy holds the gun down low, out of sight. Mary drives up to the guards. They are both large, heavily armed men.

She cracks her window. One of the guards leans in...

GUARD

Shut out your lights.

The guard moves quickly away... the other guard steps to the gate and pulls it open. He waves them in.

TOMMY (softly)

Nice talkin' to ya... Coupla charmers,
those two.

MARYS POV - MOVING

Darkness. A flashlight beam waves down the road and Mary drives toward it...

As they pass the light, we see another man with a flashlight further along. As they pass him we see another, then another and another... gradually the flashlights lead down a dark track opening into a well sheltered field.

Finally a man steps out in front of the car. It's Charles Shepard. He steps around to the drivers' side door. Mary opens her window.

SHEPARD

Just stay in the car. We don't have
much time.

Shepard turns and signals with a wave of his arm.

EXT CAR - SHEPARD

turns again and waves in the other direction.

VOICE (far off)

All Clear!

TOMMY

What the hell is goin' on?

Shepard waves again...

Suddenly, arc lights BURST ON and flood the area surrounding the car... The lamps are mounted on large stanchions forming a rough circle.

There's a flurry of activity... FIVE or TEN PEOPLE run across the lit area in front of the car.

Sitting in the center of the circle is a box... It's about four feet high, two feet wide, three deep. It looks like an ordinary shipping trunk, but covered with valves, pipes, and scuba-like tanks.

ON TOMMY AND MARY

The arc lights illuminate their faces, Tommy's mouth hangs open.

Shepard reappears at Mary's window.

MARY

What the hell is that?

SHEPARD

Get your rear door open.

CIRCLE OF LIGHT

Four or five people converge on the case and carefully pick it up. They circle the car and lift it into the cargo area.

SHEPARD

leans back into Mary's window. He holds a small black box.

CLOSE

The box has a large digital display on its face. Shepard hits a switch on it's top. Immediately the display flashes on. It says: 72:00:00

SHEPARD (quickly)

Seventy two hours, starting now...

Shepard hits another switch and the display starts to rapidly count down in tenth of a second splits.

Shepard hands Mary the box...

SHEPARD

...When you get a hundred miles outside Salt Lake, throw this switch. Tha'll start a 200 ultrahertz microbeacon... that's higher than the Cross normal monitors. Our people'll pick you up.

MARY

They'll have the money?

SHEPARD

They'll pay you then and there.

MARY

What if we go over seventy-two hours?

SHEPARD

Storage life on the cargo is limited... and our associates in Utah can only hold out for so long... seventy-two hours is the cut-off. After that you might as well keep right on going... straight to hell for the good it'll do...

Shepard hands Mary the running clock. We hear the sound of the rear hatch being shut.

SHEPARD

...we'll get you back to the main gate... then you're on your own.

A siren begins to WAIL loudly in the distance. Shepard looks nervously off into the darkness.

The arc lights cut out with a CLUNK. Shepard fades into blackness.

SHEPARD

Be careful... and good luck... we're depending on you.

Mary slams the car into gear and spins it into a hard one-eighty. She guns the car back the way they came. The siren WAILS again.

MARYS POV

Faster now, she steers the car past the flashlight men. Finally the gate is in sight...

TOMMY

Hold it! I got somethin' on the screen.

CAR EXT

Mary slows and stops the car.

RADAR SCREEN

The arm swings... a large BLIP.

TOMMY

Outside the gate... maybe quarter mile... it's moving and moving fast...

Mary pulls out a pair of binoculars and looks...

POV - THE GATE

The guards pace nervously, their guns at the ready.

TOMMY

...maybe two hundred yards...

CLOSE: MARY'S FACE

tenses. There's a long pause.

TOMMY

...Wait... I lost it...

(pause)

...mighta been another courier...
picked us up and thought we were
medical.

GATE:

One of the guards turns slowly and faces the direction of Mary's car... He steps directly in front of the gate...

Suddenly a huge Red Cross truck SMASHES through and flattens the gate, trapping and crushing the watching guard. Sirens WAIL and the huge searchlights on the back of the truck BLAST ON!

THE SECOND GUARD

dives to the ground... He lifts his gun and sends out a blast of machine gun fire. B-B-B-BBAM-BAM-BAM!

The truck never pauses but ROARS past him and heads straight ahead towards Mary's car.

INT CAR

TOMMY

We're fucked!

MARY

We gotta get around 'em...

Mary hammers at the accelerator and jerks at the wheel. She steers the car down through a ditch next to the road.

Tommy pulls open the roof hatch and sticks the nose of his gun out. He opens fire... B-B-B-B-BAM BAM BAM!

WIDE - EXT

The truck slows as the big light swings around and picks out Mary's car.

In the beam of the searchlight Mary charges over the rough field... trying to get around the truck.

INT. CAR

MARY

Try and knock out that light!

Tommy hangs out the roof hatch slinging lead. B-B-B-BAM! Mary hammers at the steering wheel.

EXT

A big cannon swings around on the truck and fires a volley... SHOOOP!

The missile lands a few feet away from the car. BOOM! WHOOSH!

INT CAR

A tremendous heave of earth rains over the windshield. Mary ducks as she tries to steer around it.

EXT

Mary's car jumps inot the path between the gate and the truck. SHOOOP! BOOM! WHOOSH! Another shower of dirt pours over the car.

THE SECOND GUARD

stands up and rushes towards the big truck. His gun flares in the blackness.... B-B-B-B-BAM-BAM-BAM!

INT CAR

Mary jerks at the wheel as Tommy fires another loud barrage.

WHOOSH! Another heave of dirt crashes across the car windows. Tommy ducks back inside, covered with dirt.

MARY

Did you hit anything out there?!

TOMMY

They'll cream us if he gets it turned around...

BOOOM! Another shell lands next to the car. Mary fights the wheel. Tommy jerks back out the roof. BAM-BAM-BAM!

EXT CAR

BOOOM! Another shell goes off... Mary jerks the car around it. The second guard is running at her, waving her towards the gate. He rushes the truck and keeps his gun firing.

THE FIRST GUARD'S BODY:

lays crushed under the smashed chain-link.

Mary's car CRASHES over it again.

THE SECOND GUARD

stops just a few yards from the truck... the searchlight finds him... he shines white hot in the night... his gun shoots wildly B-B-B-B-BAM-BAMBAMBAM!

Suddenly a burst of gunfire from the truck rips into his chest. He falls...

EXT GATE

Mary's car skids around the corner onto the road surface and momentarily leans up on two wheels.

Another BLAST from the Cross cannon digs into the roadway in front of them. BOOM! WHOOSH!

INT CAR

As it slams back down on four wheels, Mary accelerates and skids around the shell hole in front of her.

EXT: DOWN ROAD

The tires whine on the road surface as the car roars off into the moonlight.

INT CAR - MOVING

MARY

Are they following?

As the car BANGS and ROCKS on the road, Tommy peeks out the rear and checks his instruments.

TOMMY

No... They headed the other way... but I don't think our new friends back there are gonna make it.

MARY

I'm not sure I'd call 'em friends... That's no care package we picked up.

Tommy glances nervously over his shoulder...

CLOSE ON TRUNK

Six pilot lights on the shipping case flash. They are all bright green. The trunk shudders with the rough jerking of the car.

TOMMY

Four hours to daylight... we can just make the mountains.

FADE TO BLACK.

In black: A machine gun BURSTS...

FADE IN:

EXT: FIELD - NIGHT - LOW ANGLE ON GROUND

A body in a Red Cross uniform falls with a THUD. We PULL BACK...

WIDER

There are other bodies on the ground. The big Red Cross truck stands in the background. Its engine throbs at idle, filling the air with a deathly vibration. Its spotlights blare brightly in the night.

A Red Cross guard holds a smoking machine gun. Behind him is a tall middle aged man. He is DOCTOR ALWIN SPOOR. Spoor wears a patch on his chest. It says, simply... "#1".

Spoor turns to the man next to him, it's Charles Shepard, in handcuffs... a stunned expression on his face.

SPOOR

When did you become dissatisfied with the organization, Charles?

SHEPARD

When the organization became more important than it's purpose.

Spoor calls out to his guards...

SPOOR

Burn the dead!

(a pause, to Shepard)

You've failed to understand the economic and political ramifications of your success... For the last time... what have you done with our little machine?

Shepard stares at Spoor... and doesn't respond.

SPOOR

(to an assistant)

Release the dogs...

(to Shepard, tightly)

Nothing can be more important than the Cross!

Spoor spins and walks away towards the truck.

SPOOR

Clear the area!

Shepard raises his head solemnly as the dogs BARKING grows louder.

SHEPARD'S POV

Five or six snarling GERMAN SHEPARDS rush straight at him.

CLOSE ON SHEPARD

The dogs attack... their teeth rip into his flesh.

CUT TO:

CAMPSITE - SIERRA NEVADAS - DAY

Mary's car, with the trunk still strapped in its cargo area, sits in the background. A bright sun has risen over a nearby mountain.

Mary bends over the big map we saw earlier. A small cookstove sits next to her and she absentmindedly stirs a simmering pot of something brownish. She sips at it with a large spoon.

Tommy is a few yards away from the car. He peers out over the edge of the campsite with a pair of binoculars.

MARY

Anything?

TOMMY

Nope... we're not bein' followed.

She stirs the stew.

MARY

...I guess this stuff's about as good as it's gonna get.

Tommy puts down the binoculars and joins Mary at the stove. She hands him a bowl of the goop.

Tommy examines the bowl. He pulls a spoonful of the brown stuff and sniffs it.

TOMMY

Where the hell did you learn to cook, anyway?

MARY

Fuck you. You don't like it, do it yourself.

TOMMY

I fix the car, I man the radio... if I cooked, and believe me I could do better than this, what the hell would you do? It'd be embarrassing.

MARY

I'd never let you touch my fuckin' food.

Despite the talk, they both eat hungrily.

MARY

You know I been thinking about this Doctor Shepard character... what if... his method of stopping Ultraplague is to wipe it out... kill off everything and everyone.

TOMMY (with a smile)

You mean... take out the entire eastern United States.

MARY

Could they do that? An H-bomb or something. Just kill every living thing. Plague included.

TOMMY (still smiling)

I don't know... Looks like the Ultra might beat 'em to it anyhow. A bomb would have to be pretty big.

Tommy gestures towards the car.

TOMMY

Bigger'n that I think...

(pause)

...course ...we could always open it up and see what's inside...

MARY

You know a lot about nuclear weapons?

They both got on eating.

TOMMY

I was just kidding....

CUT TO:

TIM'S OFFICE - INT DAY

Tim sits, working at his desk. There's a KNOCK at the door.

TIM

Come in...

The office door swings open and a hooded technician steps in. A ridiculously large gas mask covers the face.

TIM
Ruthie? What's the problem?

Ruthie approaches Tim slowly.

CLOSE ON TIM

TIM
Ruthie... Ruth?

In a quick move, Tim snaps open a drawer and picks a revolver out with his right hand.

RUTHIE

swings a machine gun out from behind her back...

TIM

can't get off a shot. The machine gun BURSTS... Tim slumps behind his desk.

CUT TO:

INT MARYS CAR - MOVING

TOMMY (on radio)
Zero Base, Base... this is Beta
Whiskey Two Three. Beta Whiskey Two
Three... come in...

Tommy throws a switch and waits. We hear radio white noise.

TOMMY (to Mary)
Where the hell is he?

MARY
We've never been this far out before.

TOMMY
That ain't it. Somethin' else goin'
on.

He pauses a second...

TOMMY (into radio)
Zero Base... Base... this is Beta
Whiskey Two Three. Come in...

PAUL (vo, on radio)
Beta Whiskey this is Zero Base... go ahead.

TOMMY
Paulie? Shit, where you been?

PAUL (vo)
...had a problem with the transmitter, had to replace a board... Listen... Ben Grady picked up a report off the blackmarket... Head straight up 190 to Route 374... That looks like the cleanest spot to cut the wire.

Mary and Tommy look at one another.

TOMMY
Got it... uh... better keep this short.

PAUL (vo)
Right... over and out.

Tommy punches out the radio.

TOMMY
Did you hear that?

MARY
Yeah... Paulie just got a report from a dead man.

CUT TO:

DISPATCHER'S OFFICE - INT DAY

Paul has a big gun pointed at the back of his head. He switches out the radio. Doctor Alwin Spoor stands nearby.

SPOOR
That was very good. You've been very helpful, son...

Paul stares at Spoor. His face looks bruised... beaten.

SPOOR (to assistant)
...Let's get the fastest cars out of the pool... And alert the Red Cross installations in western Nevada. I want this entire compound and everything in it burned to the frostline...

Suddenly Paul spins... his face is red, he breaks the guards hold on him and lunges at Spoor...

PAUL
You'll never find them... they'll
outrun you...

One of the guards hammers Paul's skull with the butt of his gun. Paul falls at Spoor's feet.

SPOOR (quietly)
Now, son... that car is carrying the
most dangerous medical weapon of this
century... I cannot afford to let it
out of my control...
(turning to the door)
...you've been very helpful.

PAUL (bleeding, glaring)
You... fucking bastard.

Spoor stops and turns to Paul. He throws him a fatherly grin.

SPOOR
Have you had a blood test lately, son?

Paul stares. The guard over him grabs him by the hair and jerks his head back.

SPOOR
...We can use healthy men like you...
(to guard)
Bring him over to the labs and have
him tested. I think he may make a good
vehicle for some of our experimental
project
(to Paul, soft, smiling)
Tomorrow, you may wake up with an
extra hand grafted to the back of your
neck... or a parasitic brood of skin-
worms implanted in your chest... and
perhaps then, you'll wish you were
more polite to me.

CUT TO:

DEATH VALLEY - ROADWAY - NIGHT

Marys car streaks down the long flat road.

INT CAR - MOVING

Mary's at the wheel. Tommy sits in the back. He's digging through their food stores. He pulls a can out of the box. They talk loud over the roadnoise, without the intercom.

TOMMY

Corned beef hash... 1979...

MARY

Oh an excellent year!

ROADSIDE - EXT

Mary's car FLASHES by a low sand dune. A small figure, a DWARF, rises from a prone position and waves at someone offscreen.

A beat up black Toyota (circa 1975) pulls up near the dwarf, he dives in the missing passenger window. The Toyota spins its' wheels on the loose dirt and charges out on the roadbed.

INT CAR

Tommy continues to dig through the foodbox...

TOMMY

...my personal favorite... Beef
Stew... '84... three of 'em.

THE TOYOTA

Lights out, it speeds down the road.

TOMMY'S RADAR

A BLIP shows up.

TOMMY

...and two baked beans... no vintage.

WIDE AGAIN

Mary yawns.

The radar BEEPS... and Tommy looks casually at the screen.

TOMMY

Shit.

MARY

Tom?

Suddenly a shot BLASTS OPEN the passenger window.

MARY'S POV - OUT SHATTERED WINDOW

The black Toyota is riding inches away from Mary's car.

MARY

Shit! Tommy!

INT. CAR

Mary ducks down below her steering wheel as another shot BOOMS! and the driver's side window SHATTERS!

Mary's foot hammers at the gas pedal.

EXT CAR - MOVING

Mary's car jerks ahead of the Toyota.

INT CAR

Mary pops back up and grabs the wheel. Tommy is alert, working his keyboard. The wind HOWLS through the broken windows.

TOMMY

Shit... are they Cross?

MARY

I don't think so... Where...?

TOMMY

Right behind us...

There's a BANG - BANG and the car jerks.

TOMMY

They're shootin' for the tires.

Mary pulls the wheel to the left and the right.

TOYOTA'S POV - DOWN RIFLE BORE

Mary's car sways laterally across the road... making the tires a difficult target. The rifle fires... BANG! And again... BANG!

INT MARY'S CAR

The WIND and ROADNOISE ROAR.

MARY

Switch with me!

Mary sits on the right edge of her seat and reaches down and pulls a glass bottle from under the dashboard. It's filled with amber colored liquid and has a cork stuffed in the top.

In a well practiced maneuver, Tommy squeaks up around Mary and into the drivers seat. Mary swings over into the empty area where the passenger seat would be.

BANG! BANG! The car JERKS from the impact of more bullets. Tommy grabs the wheel with both hands as Mary lets go. He tries to keep up the same wavering avoidance maneuver, his head darting back and forth, muttering all the while...

Mary pulls the cork out the bottle and stuffs a short length of rag in the opening... a perfect Molotov Cocktail.

MARY (shouting)

When I tell you, lock up the brakes.

TOMMY

Whaaat!???

MARY

Just do it!!

Mary knocks out the remaining glass from the passenger window. The wind tears at her hair and howls inside the car.

MARY

Stay hard to the left and pick a straight line!

TOMMY

Jesus Mary! One-eyed people are not known for their driving ability. It has to do with depth---

MARY

---Just hold it straight!

EXT CAR

Tommy straightens the car and puts it on the left side of the road. It kicks up dirt and rocks from the left side shoulder.

The Toyota charges forward, staying to the right and advancing on Mary's car.

MARY

lights the cocktail and leans out the window, bracing herself against the car door.

MARY

Lock'em!

Tommy looks at Mary... hesitates.

MARY

Lock the brakes!

THE CAR TIRES

are spinning and jerking violently. Suddenly they stop spinning and LOCK. They SCREEECH on the roadway.

MARY'S TORSO

slams against the window opening.

EXT: ON TWO CARS

The Toyota jerks to the right... and SCREAMS by Marys car. She cocks her arm and throws... hard.

The cocktail CRASHES through the driver's window.

WHOOSH!! The inside of the Toyota lights up... it streaks down the road and goes up like a fireball, as Marys car squeals and jerks to a halt.

The burning car tears off the roadway into the brush. It careens across the desert, then slows to a stop.

A flaming figure, the dwarf, crawls out of the car and runs into the desert.

After a few steps... he falls.

CUT TO:

DEATH VALLEY ROADSIDE - EXT - NIGHT

Marys car is hidden off the road behind a huge old billboard. The rear hatch is open and the trunk sits on the ground.

Tommy works on the skin of the car, patching it with a trowel and fiberglass compound. The area is lit by a large gasoline lantern that hisses nearby.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Mary kicks her way over a low hillside. She carries a long - flashlight and a small box with a handle and a bunch of wires hanging off. She has a rifle slung over her shoulder.

Tommy turns and looks up.

TOMMY

How'dya make out?

MARY

Two bodies... Small traces of plague... but... there wasn't much left...

Mary tosses her stuff down and sits near the light.

MARY

How's the car?

TOMMY

Not bad... I covered the windows with plastic... and I'm pluggin' the skin... It won't be pretty but it'll keep out the germs.

Tommy smooths the putty over a bullet hole with a trowel.

TOMMY

I'm sorry about takin' my eye off the radar back there, Mare.

MARY

Well... I guess I wasn't payin' attention either... Thirty hours and we're not even out of California.

TOMMY

I'm afraid we got another problem.

MARY

The box?

Tommy finishes up the patching and scrapes off his tools.

TOMMY

Yeah. I found three bullet marks. None of 'em broke the skin but one busted up a valve line to an external tank... there's been leakage. I think one of the tanks is empty...

MARY

What kind of leakage?

TOMMY

A liquid... Could be fuel... maybe refrigerant. I'm not sure. I know whatever's in there... could be spoiling...

Tommy squats down next to Mary. Together they stare at the trunk.

POV

The trunk sits on the sandy desert floor... it's chrome lines glow in the golden lantern light.

Of the six flashing pilot lights, three have changed from green to red.

MARY

We don't get paid if whatever's in there isn't a hundred percent... whatta ya think?

TOMMY

Well... it's almost dawn... let's sleep for a while... then if the rest o' those light's go red... we make like Christmas mornin'....

CUT TO:

BEHIND BILLBOARD - NIGHT

Tommy's asleep next to the car.

There's a NOISE offscreen somewhere and Tommy wakes. He reaches for his gun and quickly moves off...

POV

There's a light on the other side of the billboard.

TOMMY - MOVING

He sneaks to the far leg of the billboard structure and looks around.

POV

A flashlight beam moves slowly in the dark.

TOMMY

Who's there?

MARY (vo)

It's just me.

TOMMY

relaxes and steps away from the foot of the big sign and moves into the dark towards the voice.

MARY

sits on the ground staring above at the billboard. Tommy joins her.

TOMMY

What're ya doin'?

MARY

Just lookin'...

Mary shines the light up into the darkness. Tommy looks.

REVERSE

Mary's flashlight moves slowly across the sign. We see it's a tattered old advertisement for a some kind of seaside hotel.

MARY

What's it say?

WIDE

TOMMY (haltingly)

Pacific Beach Resort Hotel.

MARY

Slow.

TOMMY

Gimme.

Tommy takes the flashlight from Mary and picks out the syllables with the spot of the light.

TOMMY

See... Pa- ci- fic...

MARY

Pa- si- fick... That's a "c"... I thought "c" was ka...

TOMMY

Not here it ain't... it's an exception to the rule.

MARY

I hate that.

TOMMY
Beach...

MARY
Beee... cha.

TOMMY
Re... sort...

MARY
Ree... zort... What the hell is a re-
sort anyway?

As they read and talk we...

DISSOLVE TO:

BEHIND BILLBOARD - DAY

CLOSE ON TRUNK

All six LEDs are red. They FLASH insistently.

TOMMY

is boring out the cylinder on the trunk lock. He frees it from
the top of the trunk.

TOMMY
That's it... grab the other side.

WIDER

Mary moves to the other side of the trunk. We see that they've
already disassembled most of the plumbing mounted on the skin.

They grab the ends of the lid and slide it off.

There's a second lid fastened down with simple clasps. Excited-
ly they tear at the clasps and lift the lid clear.

CLOSE ON THEIR FACES

as their mouths drop...

POV

The inside of the case is like an artist's rendering of an
embryo in the womb:

There's a thick block of foam, completely filling the interior
of the case. Inside the foam there's a perfect negative impres-
sion, a precisely formed hole that caresses and protects its
cargo...

That cargo... is a small human being...

It lays sideways in the foam, locked in a fetal position. It has a large breathing apparatus strapped to its face. There are wastepipes and tubes strapped around its midsection.

The entire body, and all its paraphenalia are wrapped, mummified really, in long greasy strips of white cotton.

CUT TO:

ROADWAY - MOJAVE DESERT

Three big old cars marked with Red Cross insignia pound across the desert road. They're outfitted similiarly to Mary's car... sheet metal rivetted over the windows, electronic equipment mounted on the roofs. They're painted dull brown and wear big, lugged tires.

INT CAR

Doctor Spoor sits in the rear seat. There's a radioman next to him, a driver and armed assistant in front. They all wear Red Cross uniforms. Badges with distinct numbers are prominent on their chests.

SPOOR (to radioman)

The border office should expect our arrival in four hours. The carriers are to be captured alive. That's important. Alive.

RADIOMAN

I'll stress the priority, sir.

SPOOR

Son, I don't want you to "stress the priority". I want you to tell them that Captain Doctor Alwin Spoor is on the way... and that no one in that car is to be hurt... and I want that clear!

(to driver)

I thought these were our fastest units?

DRIVER

Yes sir, our fastest cars... but the roads are not the easiest...

SPOOR

Perhaps I should have asked for our fastest drivers too.

CUT TO:

BEHIND BILLBOARD - DAY

Mary holds the body as Tommy unwinds the long greasy wrapping.

We see that the figure is indeed human. A large oxygen mask covers most of the head. Carefully Mary and Tommy pull off the mask and the pipes and lay the body down on a blanket in the sand.

THE BODY

is that of a young boy... maybe twelve years old. His head is completely shaved. His skin is pale... almost white. He is thin and has almost no muscle tone. There are deep blue bruises covering the insides of his legs and arms.

Mary lays her face on the boys thin chest.

MARY

Heartbeat's faint.

Tommy sniffs at the gas mask.

TOMMY

He had air... mixed with some kind of knockout gas... probably kept him completely narcotized...

Mary pulls open an eyelid and peers into it.

Tommy studys the trunks interior apparatus.

TOMMY

Quite a rig... complete environment. Waste lines... intravenous feeding tubes... Only way to travel...

MARY

...But I don't get it... Why not just send him as a passenger... Why keep a kid like this locked up?

TOMMY

Maybe he gets car sick....

ANGLE ON THE BOY

He lays pale and innocent on the blanket.

MARY

Did you see his arms?

TOMMY

Yeah... he's got needle tracks like a junkie.

MARY

You think he's dangerous?

TOMMY

No plague symptoms....

Tommy goes back to examining the trunk.

CLOSE ON BOY

An odd looking kid... almost not human... face too round...
brow too flat... eyes too narrow.

Slowly, the boy's eyes open. They shut sleepily for a second...
and then open again. They're light blue and have an eerie,
alien quality.

Marys' breath catches in her throat.

WIDE

MARY

He's awake!

Tommy moves quickly over next to Mary.

TOMMY

What's he got in his hand?

CLOSE ON HIS HAND

His fist is tightly clenched.

Mary's reaches in and gently pry at his fingers. His palm opens
and reveals his secret...

...a broken seashell.

CUT TO:

ROADSIDE BEHIND BILLBOARD - DAY