

BREAKDOWN LANE

an original screenplay by

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July 1, 2013

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A BASIC CABLE PREACHER stands before a gawdy, churchy backdrop, wearing a shiny suit and vestments. The sparkle from his gold tooth punctuates his speech.

PREACHER

(Quoting)

*Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you! - John, Chapter 12, Verse 35. These words provide wisdom as relevant in our age as in John's own. For those who cherish their souls always walk in the light. But the soulless grow in numbers each day and infect others with their wickedness.*

He pauses, gripping his Bible tightly.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

Those who would deny the teachings of the Lord would have us believe that we "evolved" from the beasts. Is it any wonder that our lust has caused us to evolve INTO beasts? We have brought upon us our own destruction, my beloved.

Pulling back from the PREACHER, he is revealed to be broadcasting...

... On a LAPTOP, on the cluttered countertop of a desert gas station. This place is sad and desolate. The gum was probably last restocked during the Eisenhower administration.

PREACHER

(Quoting, on laptop)

*I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light. I looked, and behold, there was no man. I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before the Lord, before his fierce anger. For thus says the Lord, "The whole land shall be a desolation." - Jeremiah, Chapter 4, verses 23 through 27.*

Another pause to pray.

An assortment of junk food crashes on the counter. It hits all the major food groups: Sweet, salty, fried, and processed.

The customer is KIRBY LANE. Beautiful and confident, she also protects herself with an emotional armadillo's shell, equal parts attitude, sarcastic looks, and technology to keep people at a distance.

KIRBY

Hey there. Just this stuff and...

Kirby rummages through her fistful of cash.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

... let's make it \$12.92 in gas.

Watching the preacher, the ATTENDANT has no time for Kirby. She smiles absently and turns up the volume.

PREACHER

(on laptop)

Isolation has become the status quo. Not merely isolation from each other, but from the teachings of the church as well. No longer do we have the community of the church to support us. Instead, we hide behind false screens and the lies of so-called popular culture.

Kirby's ring tone ("My Dingaling" by Chuck Berry) interrupts. She sneaks a peek at her phone: VINCENT CALLING. She sends it to voicemail. Looks back at the Attendant, still enthralled by the Preacher video.

She holds out the money. Sighs. Waits.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

We no longer feed each other, we feed OFF OF each other, devouring our neighbors and fellow human beings in hope of nourishing our holy spirits. Unless we change our ways, we will all know the feeling of being devoured.

(Quoting)

*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a beast in the desert, seeking someone to devour.* - First Peter, Chapter 5, Verse 8.

The attendant clicks LIKE on the video. Her vote duly noted, she finally turns to Kirby.

ATTENDANT

I love him.

KIRBY

How can you love someone you've never met?

Her phone BLOOPS. NEW TEXT FROM VINCENT.

The Attendant uses one hand to gather up Kirby's money, the other to pull up a new Preacher video entitled HEALED.

ATTENDANT

Don't overpump.

Kirby gathers up her grub.

KIRBY

You have a nice day too!

With a bump of her behind, she swings the door open.

ATTENDANT

And honey?

Kirby turns back.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Be careful. There are crazies out there.

Kirby smirks and heads to the pumps.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

3

Kirby flinches in the bright sun, and scoots to her car. Starts pumping the gas. A SCRAGGLY MAN in a big, droopy hat leers at her, gnawing on a weed. He scratches at a RASH on his neck.

Kirby catches his eye.

He raises an eyebrow. Brown teeth emerge from within his scraggly beard.

She starts to smile back, thinks better of it, whips out her phone, and scrolls around.

Suddenly, a dilapidated RV CAREENS into the station, nearly flattening Kirby, her car, and the gas pumps.

The driver, DEE, flops out of the door and bee-lines it for Kirby.

She is haggard and strung out, but her clothes and hair indicate that recently she was your standard happy suburban wife and mom. She grabs Kirby's arm.

DEE

Please! You have to help me!

Kirby yanks her arm away and tries to focus on her phone, but Dee's pleas are impossible to ignore.

DEE (CONT'D)

PLEASE!

Kirby's scraggly admirer gets to his feet and starts to amble over. He scratches his rash some more, and a pustule bursts. His gait shows sign of one paralyzed leg. Kirby catches sight of him.

KIRBY

All right, Ma'am. What's wrong?  
Show me.

Dee grabs Kirby by the hand and drags her into the RV.

CUT TO:

4 INT. RV - DAY

4

The interior of the RV is a wreck. Hastily-packed suitcases strewn around, cabinets swung open, food spilled all over the floor and furniture. Black spatters on windows and walls.

A YOUNG BOY sits on the floor of the tiny bathroom, traumatized.

Huddled on the couch, Dee's husband looks like the Grim Reaper turned up his nose, saying "Too gross for me." Out-of-control lesions leak yellowy-black sludge. His eyes, bloodshot and swollen. His nose leaks black blood.

He shivers stiffly, moaning in pain and confusion as his body betrays him.

As Dee drags Kirby toward her disintegrating husband, Kirby bangs her hand on the stove and drops her phone.

DEE

Help him, please. You need to help him.

Kirby recoils in horror.

KIRBY

He's not contagious, is he? Maybe I can look something up online and...

Dee's husband looks to Dee. Confused.

DEE

Your name is Richard Hanna. We got married ten years ago. Remember, my love? Stay with me. We danced to Garth Brooks as our wedding song. Your brother got drunk and joined us on the dance floor.

Richard, desperately clinging to some form of his humanity, looks his wife in the eye and tries to smile. His body jerks, nervous system shutting down.

Dee hugs him and pulls away, pus roping from his pustules to her face.

DEE (CONT'D)

My Richard.

Dee calms down a bit. Kirby helps her to the ground until she is sitting, shock replacing panic, sadness replacing horror in her face.

KIRBY

What's your name, dear?

Dee can't take her eyes off her deteriorating husband.

DEE

I'm Dee. He's dying isn't he?

KIRBY

I don't know, Dee. Maybe we should find a hospital.

DEE

The Emergency Room was overflowing. People everywhere. He wanted to try somewhere else. I shouldn't have listened. I think I killed him. I think running made it worse.

KIRBY

Dee, don't blame yourself. Maybe if we...

Dee is too shocky to cry, but her voice is full of pain and longing.

DEE

I can't believe this is happening. My whole life I went it alone. And I was happy! Sunny Dee my friends always called me.

At the sound of the words "Sunny Dee," Richard looks to her, straining against his own body, love in his eyes.

DEE (CONT'D)

One year -- I was 23 I think -- I went stag to sixteen weddings. Danced with all the boys, never had to check in with anyone. Just not the pairing-up kind, I supposed.

She reaches out and holds Richard's hands. His paralyzed hand can't grasp her back, but his face shows he's trying.

DEE (CONT'D)

Then I met this guy. Never thought love at first sight could happen to me. He proposed to me on our first date. Before our first date, really. I answered the door and he was on one knee.

Richard manages a smile. His pain seems to subside in this memory. Dee wells up. She shows Kirby her ENGAGEMENT RING.

DEE (CONT'D)

It's fake, but I haven't taken it off since.

Dee kisses her fingers and places them to Richard's forehead. When she pulls her hand away, yellow goop comes back with it.

DEE (CONT'D)

And now I've killed him. I've been so happy with him. Why can I only think about how much I regret my time without him?

Richard barfs black sludge all over himself, then contorts in agony. Dee's kid, TYLER, interrupts. Only eight years old, watching his father's illness is robbing him of his innocence before our eyes.

TYLER

Mommy, what's a Sisyphus?

He holds Kirby's phone. The news site she was reading is still up. The word SYPHILIS is prominently displayed.

Kirby takes the phone from him.

KIRBY

Dee, I'll call 911. I'm sorry. I don't know what else I can do.

Dee is transfixed by Richard. Her gaze seems to be keeping his pain in check, so she is afraid to look away. Kirby grabs Tyler's hand. They exit together.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

5

Kirby, visibly upset, drags Tyler to her car. She returns the gas nozzle to its cradle, opens the passenger side and opens the glove compartment. All kinds of junk spills out, on the floor of the car, and onto the ground.

She rummages around until she finds a FULL PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE. The label reads: TAKE ONE PILL FOR TROUBLE SLEEPING. DO NOT EXCEED TWO PILLS PER 24 HOURS.

She dumps a couple of pills into her hand. She gives them to Tyler.

KIRBY

Give these to your Mom. Tell her they'll help your Dad sleep.

She shoos him away.

Kirby gets in her car, and tries to close the door. The Scraggly Man blocks it.

SCRAGGLY MAN

Nice thing you did for that lady.

Kirby gives him a look that says, "When I cut you, you won't think I'm so nice."

He backs off and she closes the door. He knocks on the window. She rolls it down. He hands her a pile of junk that fell out on the ground earlier.

SCRAGGLY MAN (CONT'D)

Your detritus.

Kirby takes it, and GINGERLY releases the clutch and steps on the gas. Her car bucks and stalls.

With a groan, she peels out, and departs from creepiest gas station in history, leaving her decapitated car charger wobbling on the ground.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. HIGHWAY ON-RAMP - DAY

6

A DESPAIRING MAN runs along the on-ramp. His BLUETOOTH HEADSET glows as he spins and shoots out his thumb, begging for a lift.

KIRBY

Sorry, Buddy. No can do.

She accelerates past the DESPAIRING MAN, and onto the highway.

CUT TO:

7 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - DAY

7

Kirby hits Cruise Control as the long highway stretches before her. Her phone rings. VINCENT CALLING. This time she punches ANSWER.

VINCENT

Yo, Kirbs!

Kirby smiles at the sound of his voice.

KIRBY

Hey! What's up?

VINCENT

Just checking in.

The smile fades. She hates this "intimacy" bullshit.

KIRBY

Aha. Hey. Did you know the family from THE HILLS HAVE EYES opened a gas station?

VINCENT

You on your way?

KIRBY

You betcha.

Her phone beeps a reminder: AUDITION. 4:00. Looks at her dashboard clock: 4:30pm. She punches DISMISS.

VINCENT

Maybe some time you'll let me come to your place.

KIRBY

Let's not have this conversation for the millionth time.

VINCENT

I could meet your friends.

KIRBY

They're all jerks.

VINCENT

I could cook you my famous pizza rolls.

KIRBY

Real pizza. My treat.

VINCENT

You don't sleep well in my bed.

KIRBY

I'm not going there to sleep.

She makes an exaggerated wink.

VINCENT

You just winked at the phone, didn't you?

She laughs. Vincent takes a long pause. When he returns to the line, his voice is flatter, the happiness forced.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Fine. But you've got me wondering if you have heads in your freezer.

CUT TO:

8 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - EVENING

8

The sunset reflects off the mountains and hoodoos in the Badlands, giving everything a bloody red glow.

Gnawing on a hunk of beef jerky, Kirby laughs along with Vincent's tinny voice on the cell phone.

KIRBY

Wait! I'm coming up on another one!

Kirby accelerates until she can read the model of the car in front of her.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Ha ha!! An Outback!

VINCENT

A Rendezvous just drove past my place!

They laugh together.

KIRBY

One more!! One more!! I just passed  
a Breeze!!

That's too much. They laugh loud and long... until Vincent's voice stutters and drops out entirely.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Hello? Damn it.

SIGNAL LOST. Kirby presses END and yawns.

CUT TO:

9 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - EVENING

9

Kirby, her eyes hanging heavy, steers with her knees while she stretches her arms. The radio stutters, then stops.

She hits the SCAN button. It goes all the way around without stopping, and begins a second lap.

KIRBY

Shit.

She grabs for her phone. Zero bars. All Kirby can do is sigh and drive on.

Within a minute, Kirby fidgets in her seat. Turns on the air conditioning. Then turns it off.

Kirby steps on the gas, and brings the SUV up past 80mph.

Looks around the car for stimulation. Nothing. Starts singing to herself.

She pushes the SUV to accelerate even more. Now over 85mph, Kirby rummages in her bag of food for a distraction. She settles on a Slim Jim, and rips open the package with her teeth.

With an extra-strength pull on the plastic sleeve, she almost loses control of the vehicle, but manages to correct after an awkward swerve across the center line.

As annoyed as she is now, her attitude gets even more sour when the RED AND BLUE LIGHTS bounce off the rear-view mirror.

She pulls over, puts the gear shift in NEUTRAL, and yanks up on the EMERGENCY BRAKE. Little does she know, the SUV will never get into gear again.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS HIGHWAY - EVENING

10

The SUV pings and sighs, as the Sheriff's Deputy climbs out of his cruiser.

The Deputy -- his uniform one giant sweat stain, except where mustard has claimed the territory -- grudgingly waddles to the driver's side window, and taps on it with his night stick.

As the tinted window whirs down, it reveals Kirby, sporting her cutest "Please, Officer, don't give me a ticket" face -- dewy eyes and quivering lip busted out for full effect.

DEPUTY

License and registration. No bullshit, please.

Kirby gives up on the Sad Little Girl routine, and hands over the paperwork. She glances up at the EXTERNAL TEMPERATURE readout on the console. It reads 92 degrees.

DEPUTY (CONT'D)

Road trip, huh?

KIRBY

Skills like that, you'll make Detective in no time.

The deputy peers over his reflective sunglasses and gestures: Fork it over.

Kirby gets as cute as possible, all twinkly as she spots his phone hanging from his belt.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Hey! I have the same phone as you!

With a snort, he waddles back to the cruiser.

She leans down and rummages around behind the passenger's seat. Finally, she finds her prey. Holding a bottle of water, she pops back up, and...

DEPUTY

Miss Lane?

Kirby screams.

KIRBY

Don't sneak up on me like that!

DEPUTY

Do you know why I pulled you over?

KIRBY

To protect everyone else on the road?

The Deputy slowly turns his head toward the east. Not a sign of life. Then the other direction. Not even a little wind. Empty.

DEPUTY

Trying to break into stand up comedy,  
are you?

Kirby gives him a smile that says, "I would eviscerate you with my bare hands right now."

DEPUTY (CONT'D)

I wrote you up for Speeding and  
Dangerous Operation.

KIRBY

Come on! There's nobody to endanger!

The Deputy mops his brow and holds up his hand, silencing Kirby.

DEPUTY

I'm too tired to fight with you.  
How about this. I'll destroy the  
citation if you promise me you will  
take an hour here to sleep, and drive  
more slowly the rest of the way.

KIRBY

Really?

DEPUTY

Sixty minutes. I want your word.

KIRBY

Sold!

The Deputy hands her the ticket.

DEPUTY

I'll radio in that I let you off  
with a warning. Drive carefully.

He gets in his cruiser and drives off. Kirby sighs, turns off the SUV, and climbs out.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - EVENING

11

Kirby does some stretches, BALLERINA style, using her car like a dance rail.

She runs in place for a moment, then takes a look after the police cruiser.

KIRBY

Screw this.

She hops in and fires up the motor.

She's anxious to go, but the Deputy's tail lights are still visible.

Kirby groans. Shuts off the engine.

A COYOTE HOWLS. This lights a fire under Kirby. She slams the door.

CUT TO:

12 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT

12

Kirby bites her lip, then is overwhelmed by a huge yawn.

Her vision blurs as she watches the Deputy's tail lights recede.

KIRBY

You win.

Kirby climbs in the back. She stretches out and closes her eyes.

CUT TO:

13 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT

13

Kirby sleeps deeply, barely breathing. She doesn't even flinch when EIGHT OR TEN CARS speed by the SUV, driving like the minions of hell were crawling up their tailpipes.

Their lights disappear into the night.

CUT TO:

14 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT

14

Kirby sleeps peacefully, her hair gummed to her face by several hours' worth of drool. She snores a little.

On the front seat, her phone's screen activates, its brightness shocking the darkness.

Kirby squints, and turns over to sleep some more.

Her phone receives a text with a BLOOP!

She laughs at the attached picture of Vincent (sad face, holding a sign that says "I miss Kirby").

She texts him: I'M ON MY WAY!

She gives herself a second to yawn, then turns on the headlights, cranks the key, stomps on the clutch, and tries to push the gear shift into first.

No go.

She pumps the clutch, and tries again. No dice.

She tries one more time, using her will power to force the car into gear. Strike three.

KIRBY

Please, please. Please. First gear.  
That's all I want.

She tries again.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Okay. Second gear. Any gear.  
Reverse. Give me something.

Nothing doing.

Kirby slumps back in her seat.

She gets out of the car, and kicks it.

She gets in the driver's seat and takes a long look at the picture Vincent sent. Turns the car off. And sulks for a moment.

Finally she reaches above the center console and pushes the Northstar button.

With a click and a short delay, Kirby is on with her rep, MAXWELL. He is professional but tired, his voice betraying that he surrendered his life to the world's most boring job.

MAXWELL

This is Northstar. Maxwell speaking.  
Is this Kirby Lane?

KIRBY

Yes.

MAXWELL

How can I help you tonight, Miss  
Lane?

KIRBY

This piece of shit car won't go!

MAXWELL

Okay, Miss Lane. I understand that this is a taxing situation...

KIRBY

I go and get all this super turbo this, roadside that, and when I need the car, it craps on itself and dies.

MAXWELL

I'm sure it's not dead.

KIRBY

It has big X's where the headlights used to be.

MAXWELL

Well, let's see what we have here.

Maxwell TYPES loudly through the speaker.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Have you been doing the routine maintenance and oil changes, Miss Lane?

She blows the hair out of her face, takes a peek at the tiny sticker in the corner of the windshield: NEXT OIL CHANGE DUE AT 126,085 MILES. Checks the odometer: 192,012.

She makes a face: "That's not good."

Through gritted teeth, as if Maxwell is carrying a tray of champagne glasses and her lie is a banana peel:

KIRBY

Yes?

After a pregnant pause, Maxwell clears his throat, and plays the professional yet again.

MAXWELL

I see. Are you hurt or in any danger?

KIRBY

I think I heard some wolverines or something earlier.

Maxwell chuckles.

MAXWELL

Well, according to our records, that SUV of yours is the next best thing to a tank. You should be fine.

Over the speaker, his computer BEEPS.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Okay. Looks like you did a number on your clutch. If the car is in gear, you could drive to the next...

KIRBY

Neutral.

MAXWELL

I'll put in the call to a tow truck, but based on your location, it's going to be a couple of hours.

KIRBY

Hours! Maybe I...

MAXWELL

Don't be a hero, Miss Lane. Just sit tight. Help is on the way.

KIRBY

Thanks tons.

MAXWELL

I'll check in on you later. Thank you for using Northstar.

KIRBY

Thank y...

The speaker goes dead.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Mr. Personality.

She taps her phone.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Call Voicemail.

SIRI

Calling Voicemail.

KIRBY (O.S.)

Hi! You've reached Kirby's voicemail! I'm really sorry I missed your call, but I will call you back! I promise! Leave a message.

BEEP!

Kirby enters her passcode.

VOICEMAIL

No messages.

She ends the call.

CUT TO:

15 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT

15

Kirby sits wide-eyed, her lap full of orphaned popcorn, as a horror movie plays on her DVD player. A panicked man trapped in a MEAT COOLER.

She grabs some more corn, and as it approaches her mouth...

BEE-BOOP!

The phone makes her SCREAM and JUMP.

She gropes for her phone, pauses the movie and takes a look. An empty battery, outlined in RED, flashes ominously.

KIRBY

Damn it.

She reaches into the front, and rummages for the phone charger. Looks through everything. She finds the wire, but tracing it to its end, she discovers she severed it in the car door.

As she searches, she catches a glimpse of the vehicle's console. The BATTERY POWER INDICATOR is very low.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Shit!

Kirby turns the key. The car revs - sounding a little sluggish.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

No, no no. Don't do this to me.

She tries again. The lights dim. The DVD player skips and resets.

Kirby turns off the headlights and DVD player, checks every button, switch, and dial in the car.

And closes her eyes.

She turns the key. The car barely manages to crank a little.

RURR! Once. RURR! Twice.

KIRBY (CONT'D)  
Start, you big bastard!

RURR RURR! VROOM! The ignition catches and the engine roars to life.

Kirby turns on the headlights, and the dashboard gauges bathe her face in an eerie blue.

KIRBY (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

The BATTERY POWER INDICATOR starts to climb... but the GAS GAUGE starts to drop. It lingers around half a tank.

Kirby shuts the headlights off again. The dash goes dark, and the area is pitch black again.

A coyote YOWLS outside.

KIRBY (CONT'D)  
You can say that again.

Her phone RINGS, the LOW BATTERY indicator FLASHING ominously.

Kirby answers the call.

VINCENT  
Where are you?

KIRBY  
Car broke down, and the stupid tow truck is taking the scenic route. Want to go video?

VINCENT  
You bet I do.

A moment of magic fingers on the phone, and Vincent's face appears - a grainy and jerky image, but clear enough.

VINCENT, an unkempt goofball who skates by with a twinkly eye and deep laugh lines, mugs on the video feed.

KIRBY  
You look a little wobbly.

Vincent waggles a highball glass at the screen, with a crooked smile.

VINCENT  
Why yes I am a little horny!

KIRBY

I've had a rough day, honey. And my battery is almost dead.

VINCENT

You sound like you need to unwind a little.

She adjusts the AC vent so it blows her hair sexily.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

I could help you with that, you know. Unwinding you is my specialty.

Kirby shoots the phone a coquettish eyebrow and smiles.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Besides, what else are you going to do until the tow truck comes?

BEE-BOOP, the phone's low battery insists.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Better hurry!

Kirby licks her lips and nods to Vincent. On the screen, he moves over to the bed.

Kirby turns off the ignition, and makes sure all the interior lights are off.

The only light source is the phone screen.

Kirby climbs into the back of the car, and hikes her pants down. She takes off her shirt and bra.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Let me see you.

She smiles and moves the phone's video camera along her body.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Oh, man.

She takes a look at the screen herself. She moves her hand over her breasts and then down below the equator. Her lips part and her eyes close. She moans a little.

KIRBY

Oh. I can not wait to be with you. Let me see you.

She peeks at the screen. It's not his face, that's for sure.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Um. Your face.

VINCENT

Whatever you want, Beautiful.

She turns over on her side, riding her hand.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

In just a few hours, I'm going to be touching you there...

16 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - NIGHT 16

The SUV rocks back and forth as Kirby's orgasm overtakes her. Two passionate moans -- one live, one via video chat.

Then all is dark, except for the tiny blue glow of Kirby's phone through the window of the SUV.

Then all is quiet, except for the wind.

Then all is still.

Except for the ZOMBIE lurching through the desert, the blowing sand blinding him to the stranded SUV and the prey lying naked inside. His arm swings awkwardly from the elbow, a compound fracture jutting out. A viscous goo oozes from it.

CUT TO:

17 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT 17

Kirby lounges, face satisfied, hair tousled. Her phone briefly reads BATTERY DRAINED before flickering off.

She stretches sexily and her hand comes to rest on her laptop. She grabs it and climbs out.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - NIGHT 18

Kirby sits on the SUV's ROOF, her face illuminated by the laptop.

She activates her web browser, and starts noodling around.

She checks her email. No new messages.

KIRBY

Really?

She navigates to her address book, and selects every name.

She types into the new message:

ANYBODY OUT THERE? ANYBODY AT ALL? JUST LOOKING TO CHITCHAT.  
SHOOT ME AN EMAIL. - KIRBY.

Then she hits SEND.

She leans back and sighs. Checks her laptop's battery life.

About an hour.

She signs into an MMPORG called THE ULTIMATE REALM.

Her avatar appears on the screen - a sexy warrior woman wielding a battleaxe - And she goes searching for somebody else in the realm. She runs and runs across hills and valleys, but there are very few characters to be found. Those who are there just stand around, as if there operators were away from the computer.

Finally, she sends her character into a small village, and finds a troll there, stealing a bunch of loot and food from the abandoned houses.

She talks to him, in text:

KIRBY: HELLO. WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

TROLL: YOU'RE KIDDING RIGHT?

KIRBY: NO. WHY ARE YOU HERE?

TROLL: ONLY TWO THINGS WILL KILL YOU ANYMORE. THE OTHER ONE'S BOREDOM.

The troll raises his SWORD and brings it down on Kirby's avatar's head. Kirby dies.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Little asshole.

Several coyotes respond, howling loud and long.

Kirby is terrified. She tries to look in all directions at once without falling off the SUV's roof.

In the pitch black desert night, Kirby's breathing is her only company right now.

Something bumps the SUV.

Canine sniffing and growling sneaks up from the passenger's side.

A wet, savage bark rips out of the darkness from the driver's side.

Kirby peers over the side of the vehicle. Details are difficult to make out in the moonlight, but one thing's for sure, these ZOMBIE COYOTES will never win Best In Show.

Skinny, savage, many with open wounds and oozing yellow drool.

Two coyotes whine and move around to the rear of the vehicle where they scrap with each other. Kirby rolls back into the center of the SUV's roof.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Get away! Go on! Um... Bad dogs!  
No!

Silence. More silence. Maybe she scared them off?

Then a low, throaty growl.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Great.

She looks around in despair, then gingerly gets to her feet, the roof creaking and buckling under her.

Gnawed ears perk up. One coyote pees on the vehicle's tire, marking his turf.

Kirby sits down again, SLAMS her laptop CLOSED.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Terrific. Swell. Outstanding.

A coyote growls.

She sneaks a peak over the side. Catches the eye of a coyote.

It licks its chops.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Get lost...!

The vehicle rocks, accompanied by the spine-tingling SCREECH of thick canine toe nails on the hood of an SUV.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

What the hell?

Kirby takes a look at the hood in time to see a coyote desperately losing its grip as it slides off. Its yellowed claws wreck the paint job.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Hey!

The coyote tries again. Slides off again. But the claw marks start further up than the first.

He's getting the hang of it.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Holy shit.

This time, as he scrapes down the hood, he makes eye contact with her.

Reveals his fangs, smiling and snarling at the same time.

He reaches out and almost scrambles onto the hood.

Kirby spins around and scans for an escape route.

She tries to pry open the sunroof. No way.

She gets on her belly, and reaches down toward the driver's side door. The window is open, but not enough to climb through.

Passenger's side, same problem.

She stretches her arm through the window as far as she can, but she can't reach anything useful.

The coyotes growl and chuff - Kirby can actually hear the flecks of foam splattering from their muzzles.

She withdraws her arm.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Don't worry, doggies. I'm going to find Max, then I'm going to feed him to you.

She looks over the rear of the vehicle. The tailpipe still chugs exhaust from the running engine.

A coyote snaps. She screams.

Kirby removes her shoe, and grips it by the lace. With all of her might, she swings the shoe at the rear windshield.

It bounces off, completely ineffective. She tries again, screaming as she swings the shoe this time.

One more time. The shoe bounces off, and the lace breaks, sending the shoe along the freeway for ten or twenty feet.

A couple of coyotes give it a sniff.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Great.

Kirby takes off her remaining shoe and unlaces it. Then she threads the lace through one eye and knots it.

The weaponized shoe has a range of several feet.

She crouches beside the sunroof, cups her hands around her eyes, and peers in through the tinted plastic.

Scans the SUV's interior. Where is it? Bingo.

The bag of JERKY on the passenger's seat.

Kirby swings the shoe, sending a warning shot across the coyotes' snouts.

They creep back, yellow eyes assessing this new threat.

She tosses the shoe in the passenger's side window, and using the lace, reels it in.

It catches on the bag of jerky, and drags it a little closer to the door before losing purchase.

Kirby struggles to steady her breathing and tries again.

The bag moves another inch closer. Another try.

Over here, a coyote's eyes reflect the moonlight eerily.

Over there, two hungry coyotes have a little skirmish.

The coyotes at the front of the car take another shot at climbing on the hood.

Growls and barks combine with the sound of claws scraping.

Sweat falls from Kirby's face, and mats her hair to her skin.

She blows her hair out of her eyes and tries again.

Again. Again.

One of the coyotes gets a hind paw behind the hood ornament and scrambles.

Struggling to maintain its balance, it drools and barks at Kirby.

Kirby screams and reflexively shoots her leg out at it, catching it in the throat.

The coyote yelps and slips off the car.

Back to work on the passenger's side.

As Kirby brings the bag of jerky tantalizingly closer, several beads of sweat fall to the ground.

Coyotes come around for a sniff.

Kirby reaches in through the window with her arm. Not quite.

Hanging upside down for so long turns Kirby's face from a healthy pink to a cute red to an angry purple.

She squints her eyes hard to chase the spots away.

She strains one more time for the bag. No good.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Fuck you very much.

Kirby readjusts her body. Now she bends at the waist, the top half of her body dangling over the edge of the SUV. She slowly reaches her arm inside.

Her middle finger just brushes the bag of jerky, when...

CHUFF!

Standing on its back legs, front paws on the SUV door, a coyote's muzzle -- fangs exposed, flecks of foam on his chin -- quivers, barely an inch from Kirby's face. Its tongue flops free, all gray and mottled, through a seeping gash in its snout.

Its hot breath blows her hair out of her eyes.

She grimaces and swallows something back down.

The coyote growls at her and licks its chops.

Thick ropes of cloudy drool fall from his jowls. They spatter the SUV window as his growl blossoms into a threatening bark.

It takes all of Kirby's strength not to panic. Her eyes are saucers, her breath quick and shallow as a drum roll.

She strains with all her might, trying to reach the jerky bag. Her finger brushes it, but can't catch on.

The coyote LUNGES!

All adrenaline and reflex, Kirby swings her OTHER arm down from atop the SUV, and clobbers the coyote with her LAPTOP, smashing the machine to PIECES.

The coyote falls away, skidding in the roadside gravel.

Kirby lunges for the bag of jerky, snags it, and retreats to the center of the roof just as the coyote regains its balance and leaps at her.

It misses, jaws snapping, and crashes into the vehicle.

The coyote skulks away and bites another one, just for good measure.

Kirby scrambles to the driver's side, pulls out a hunk of jerky, and throws it into the dark desert as far as she can.

When it hits the ground, all of the coyotes on that side of the car take off after it. She throws another piece for insurance. Then leaps to the ground and into the SUV.

CUT TO:

19 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT 19

Kirby's breath gradually slows, her eyes wide: What the hell have I gotten into here?

CUT TO:

20 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - MORNING 20

Kirby sleeps, sweaty and soundly, in her panties.

Finally she lifts her head and looks out the window.

KIRBY

What the hell?

She reaches to the front of the car and turns on the ignition.

Flips on the AC and revels in the cold air for a moment.

Peeks at the outside temp. 91. Checks the time. 9:30 AM.

Kirby wipes the fog from the inside of the windows and takes a look outside. No coyotes to be found. In fact no nothing.

Not even any traffic.

She punches the Northstar button, gathers up her clothes, and scampers on to the shoulder of the road to wiggle into them.

CUT TO:

21 EXT. KIRBY'S SUV - DAY

21

As Kirby dresses, the Northstar rings.

And rings.

Twenty times now, and Kirby is ready to reach through the satellite linkup to strangle whoever she can reach.

Finally, it clicks over.

MAXWELL

Thank you for...

KIRBY

Where the FUCK is my TOW TRUCK!?  
I've been waiting for hours!

MAXWELL

Miss Lane!

KIRBY

Great. The World Champion of Customer  
Service. Let me talk to someone  
else.

MAXWELL

I'm the only one here.

KIRBY

You mean the only one there willing  
to deal with me!

MAXWELL

No... I...

She puts her head on the steering wheel, defeated.

KIRBY

Where is that damned tow, Max?

Maxwell types like lightning.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Well?

MAXWELL

I don't know what's going on, Miss  
Lane. The order went out to the tow  
dispatcher last night. I just sent  
another one, but I'm getting no  
response.

KIRBY

What am I supposed to do? Hitch a ride on a camel?

MAXWELL

Can you flag down another car?

Kirby gazes out the windshield. Not another car in sight.

She looks in the rear view. Nothing there either. She climbs out of the car, recoiling as the hot air hits her.

KIRBY

I must have accidentally taken the Twilight Zone exit.

Kirby crosses her arms, and listens to Maxwell on the other end of the line. He continues to type, punctuating with AD-LIB: "Huh?" "You have to be kidding," and so on.

MAXWELL

Miss Lane... Bad news.

KIRBY

For a change.

MAXWELL

I'm going to have to call you back in a bit. Sit tight.

Kirby hangs her head.

KIRBY

Fine.

She clicks off the Northstar linkup. Grabs for her phone.

Tries to turn it on. It's dead.

She groans loudly, and watches the Outside Temp tick from 99 to 100 degrees.

She turns off the car, and hops out.

CUT TO:

The heat radiating off the desert floor RIPPLES THE AIR.

The ground itself seems to UNDULATE.

Is it an optical illusion? Or is there something lurking underground?

Kirby scans the road in both directions. Nothing.

She wanders around to the front of her car and examines the hood. The paint is torn off in long scratches where the coyotes were trying to climb up.

Drool cooking on the hood looks like a pus omelet.

KIRBY (CONT'D)  
(slurred)  
Gross.

She wanders out to the area where she had tossed the jerky the night before. Scattered everywhere, signs of the coyotes' fight for the jerky:

Fur over here. A torn off nail there.

Here a ragged ear. There an eye, with a long stringy mess attached.

Part of a tongue.

No blood anywhere.

KIRBY (CONT'D)  
What. The. Fuck.

She WEAVES back to her car and climbs in.

CUT TO:

22 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - DAY

22

Kirby cranks on the ignition. Once the engine is running, she hits the AC.

She hits the Northstar button again. It rings and rings. Nobody answers.

She turns on the radio. Nothing.

An unfamiliar BEEPING interrupts. Her Northstar is flashing.

She hits the button.

KIRBY  
Maxwell?

MAXWELL  
Hi, Miss Lane.

KIRBY  
There is something seriously screwed going on out here.

MAXWELL

Here, too. I couldn't raise anybody on my phone.

KIRBY

These coyotes got in a huge fight. Ears left behind. Tongues torn out.

MAXWELL

They may have been rabid.

KIRBY

I guessed that when they tried to eat my face off.

MAXWELL

Try the radio.

Kirby fiddles with the radio. The EBS TEST TONE screeches for a moment, then stops.

EMERGENCY BROADCAST

This has been a test of the Emergency Broadcast System. If this had been an actual emergency...

She turns it off. They sit in silence for a very long time.

KIRBY

Glad to know they're ready if an emergency comes along.

Maxwell laughs in fear. Kirby rests her forehead on the steering wheel.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I'm going to...

MAXWELL

I need to check on...

KIRBY

I'll call you back.

MAXWELL

Okay.

The line clicks off.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY

23

Kirby scans the horizon in all directions.

KIRBY  
Hello? HELLO!!!

Silence. No wildlife. No airplanes. Even the wind seems to be holding its breath.

Kirby walks around her vehicle, one hand on the car to maintain balance.

Our girl doesn't look too good.

She collapses in the breakdown lane and tries to catch her breath. She grabs her stomach, and gets on all fours. Closes her eyes.

Then Kirby hears it. A racing engine. Wheels on pavement.

She stands and squints toward the sound. Here comes a familiar RV, driving as if to outrun the Devil himself.

She starts walking toward it, then running, then with tremendous effort, waving her hands in the air.

KIRBY (CONT'D)  
Dee! Help me! Please! Dee!

As the RV comes into focus, it looks even worse than before. The tires, bumper, and hood are coated in gore.

The RV weaves as it approaches, and we catch Dee at the wheel, sweating, squinting, rash on her face.

As the RV shambles by, Kirby has to dive out of the way to avoid getting run over.

She rises to her knees and stares at the ground, eyes droopy. Her fatigue overwhelming her, she leans forward and lays her face on the pavement. The heat causes her to jerk awake.

Finally, she stands up, and watches the RV lurch into the distance.

Her face is slack. Her arms dangle at her side.

Her state of shock makes her look an awful lot like a zombie.

Kirby climbs in her SUV, and sits there, catatonic.

DISSOLVE TO:

24 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - DUSK

24

Kirby, a sweaty, vacant, near-comatose mess, still sits in her car, staring straight ahead.

Road grit caked to her face, Kirby just stares as the sun sets behind her, reflecting in the rear view mirror, casting a red streak across her eyes.

Then a shadow crosses the reflection.

Kirby startles to life and spins to look out the rear window.

Nothing there.

Moving quickly, despite her shaking hands, Kirby secures the vehicle:

Windows. Closed.

Lights. Off.

Doors. Locked.

She kills the engine and everything else inside the SUV, and crouches as far down in her seat as she can.

She rests her ear against her door, and stifles her breath.

Kirby listens a while longer, and slowly lifts her head to look out the window. Out front, darkness spreads across the desert.

She glances in the rear view mirror. Walking out of the setting sun, a SILHOUETTE.

Lurching, but clearly HUMAN.

Kirby pulls her shit together. She lowers the window a few inches and moves back. Nothing attacks her.

KIRBY

Hey! Hello! Hey!

No response from the lumbering man. Kirby's voice strains and cracks, like she's pushing the words through a bamboo curtain.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Mister?

Still no response. The WALKING MAN gets closer to the SUV.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Pain in my balls.

She opens the door a crack, and pauses.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DUSK

25

Kirby slowly and quietly steps out of the car, scanning the whole area. Nothing dangerous.

She masks her eyes with her hand when she looks to the west, trying to make out the details of this man moving her way.

The man's SHADOW, cast by the setting sun, stretches all the way to Kirby's feet, a black smudge cutting through the brilliant purple sunlight. A big bright hole right in the center.

KIRBY

Hey, Mister! Are you okay?

Kirby takes a few excited steps toward the approaching figure, before she stops short and gives him a squint.

Something's not right.

Despite the heat, goose bumps sprout on Kirby's arm.

The hair on the back of her neck stands up.

Something primal is happening here.

Never taking her eyes off this guy, Kirby pops open the SUV's hatch, and finds the lug wrench in the spare tire compartment.

She leaves the hatch OPEN, and slowly moves toward the approaching figure.

Kirby squints into the sunset as she moves closer. A warm wind blows sand in her face.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Are you sick?

He moves closer. Closer still.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

You have no idea how shitty my day has been. If you don't say something, I am going to brain you with this thing.

The man shambles closer, his features finally visible as he blots out the sun.

His jaw hangs agape, his tongue lolls out, looking like a swollen mouse carcass. His BLUETOOTH HEADSET still glows.

The DESPAIRING MAN who was hitchhiking at the on-ramp.

One of his eyes is missing -- a yellow trail running down his cheek is all that's left. His chest is gone.

THROUGH THE HOLE, KIRBY STANDS TRANSFIXED.

She can't believe what she's seeing. Blood and chunks of flesh fall -- BLIP BLIP BLOP -- into the hip cavity.

Kirby screams, and takes a swing at the ZOMBIE. His head flops over -- the skull caving in with a sickening CRACK.

The Bluetooth spins into the air.

The zombie stumbles sideways.

Hanging from the lug wrench, a chunk of zombie flesh flaps in the breeze, wiry hair dancing.

Kirby drops the lug wrench, and turns to run.

Emerging out of the desert, rising from self-made graves, ANOTHER DOZEN ZOMBIES shamble toward Kirby. One turns to the west. The sunlight hits its face. One of its eyes bursts and oozes tapioca.

Soon, they will cut her off from the SUV.

Fighting didn't work. That leaves flight. Kirby moves in slow motion, shock adding lead weights to her feet.

It's like a nightmare. She runs as hard as she can, an awkward gait full of twitchy terror, but she moves so slow.

She coughs and licks her dry lips. She stumbles and hits the pavement hard.

The zombies' moans seem to fill the entire twilight sky.

Kirby forces herself to her feet and continues her wobbly, weaving way back to the car, looking like the town drunk on New Year's Eve. If he were being chased by zombies.

The gap closes. Her loss of manual dexterity makes it incredibly frustrating. She's so close to safety, but can't seem to focus.

She reaches for the SUV, mere feet away, and wooses off to the side, barely grabbing the bumper for balance.

A zombie grabs her by the waistband, blood, clotted and black, stains her skin. She screams, and swats the hands away.

Finally, she lunges through the open hatch, and slams it home.

CUT TO:

26 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - DUSK

26

The zombies continue to reach for her through the SUV's windows.

They bump the SUV, rocking it a tiny bit. Bodily fluids run from the DESPAIRING MAN's wounds and splat against the window.

Zombies reach for the glass, try to gaze in through the tinted windows.

They MOAN in raggedy despair.

Kirby curls into the fetal position, and closes her eyes tightly. She shivers.

A zombie cranes his neck to look in the front windshield.

It grins at Kirby. A black, slimy chunk of rotted meat -- a tongue? Brain tissue from a previous victim? -- slips from the mouth and SPLATS on the windshield.

Kirby's hand shakes weakly as she reaches out to the steering column and pulls on the directional arm.

Wiper fluid hits the zombie in the face. The zombie shambles off.

Kirby looks at her hand. It keeps shaking. Kirby covers her ears with her shaking hands.

BEEP! Kirby startles and screams. She rubs her eyes, and blinks wildly, until she can maintain a little focus on the Northstar button above her head.

Her hand shivering like mad, she manages to press the button.

Her voice is weak and reedy.

KIRBY

Max?

MAXWELL

Hi, Miss Lane. How you doing out there?

KIRBY

I think I'm sick.

MAXWELL

What's happening?

With great effort, Kirby sits up. She can barely support her head's weight. Her skin is flushed. She blinks wildly.

KIRBY

I don't feel good.

MAXWELL

How about you lie down. Turn on the air conditioner for a while.

She flips the switch, then reclines the driver's seat. Throws her arm over her eyes.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Better?

Kirby groans, delirium setting in.

KIRBY

Why don't you send me an email and I'll get back to you on that?

She slurs her words, drifts in and out.

MAXWELL

Don't pass out! Keep talking. Tell me about your boyfriend.

KIRBY

Boyfriend? I haven't had one of those since college. Asshole. Hated the music in the waiting room. I'm in the back room having an aborsh, and... who is this?

She starts laughing.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

He taught me this road game. It's simple. Just add "Anal" to the models of cars we pass. Like "Anal Explorer."

He laughs.

MAXWELL

Anal Cherokee.

KIRBY

Anal Breeze. Anal Probe.

She giggles with a snort.

MAXWELL

Anal Daytona.

Kirby's smile and breathing are both labored.

KIRBY

You aren't very good at this game.

Her words jumble and crash into each other.

MAXWELL

Your boyfriend taught you that?

KIRBY

Not my boyfriend. Vincent.

A moment of clarity, a sad truth she's not prepared to face.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Just not the pairing-up kind, I suppose.

She stares at the SCAN button on her radio.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I live my whole life on SCAN.

She moans a little.

MAXWELL

What is it?

KIRBY

Muscle cramping. I'm...

She pulls down the sun visor, blocking the carnage outside. She squints into the make-up mirror. Her voice slurs. She squints and rubs her eyes.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Spots.

MAXWELL

Miss Lane! Stay with me. Kirby!

KIRBY

Just want to sleep a while.

She starts to drift off to sleep. The zombies rock the SUV gently. They moan. She moans.

MAXWELL

Kirby!

KIRBY

Kirby.

And she's out.

MAXWELL

Kirby! Oh no! Are you there!?  
Wake up! Wake up! Don't...!

Kirby's breathing is shallow.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

You stupid, self-centered...

Kirby's breath gets shallower. Her cheeks are flushed. The  
OUTSIDE TEMPERATURE readout says 95. But she doesn't sweat.

Her shallow breathing hitches.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Don't do this to me! Okay.

Maxwell types like a madman, the sound machine-gunning through  
the speaker and into the car. Kirby doesn't budge.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Kirby! I'll be right back! I need  
to end this call. Don't die!

Click. Maxwell is gone.

In the dwindling sunlight, several more zombies join the  
first group. The SUV rocks side to side.

Northstar blinks, then the SUV's voice, soothing and  
threatening at the same time.

SUV

Alarm activated. Please step away  
from the vehicle.

The zombies don't obey the command. Zombies can be jerks  
that way.

They continue to bump and rock the SUV.

SUV (CONT'D)

Please step away from the vehicle.

Still no response from the zombies or Kirby. Ten seconds.  
Fifteen. Nothing but rocking and zombie moaning.

Then, the LOUDEST, most OBNOXIOUS CAR ALARM ever BLASTS from  
the SUV.

The zombies wince and turn away. Kirby practically jumps out of her skin, screaming and flailing.

KIRBY  
Leave me alone!

Delirious, half-asleep, one eye pasted shut, Kirby jerks her head side to side, trying to regain her bearings.

MAXWELL  
Kirby!

KIRBY  
What! Who? What!

MAXWELL  
Kirby! It's Maxwell!

With a few keyboard clicks, the alarm stops, and the zombies shuffle back into position surrounding the car.

KIRBY  
Max. I'm dying.

MAXWELL  
You're dehydrated.

KIRBY  
No. I'm thirsty.

Kirby peers into the back seat, sees her untouched beverages and food.

KIRBY (CONT'D)  
I have water.

MAXWELL  
Don't drink it too fast. You need to ration it.

Kirby cracks open a water bottle, and chugs the whole thing.

KIRBY  
Will do.

Kirby leans back, taking a deep breath.

CUT TO:

27 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT

27

She eats and drinks, gradually gaining strength as they talk. The zombies outside her car remain hungry.

MAXWELL

Symptoms include... Catatonia.  
Light sensitivity.

KIRBY

That Bluetooth lickbag has a hole in  
his chest big enough to push a  
football through.

MAXWELL

Hallucinations can be part of  
dehydration, you know.

Kirby quickly drinks another bottle of water. Cracks into  
some Gatorade, and slugs half of it down.

KIRBY

I'm feeling better.

MAXWELL

Maybe we should sleep.

The moans of the walking dead give Kirby a shiver.

KIRBY

Could you...

Kirby reaches up toward the Northstar receiver. Touches the  
speaker, as if reaching across the miles to Maxwell.

MAXWELL

What?

Jerks her hand away.

KIRBY

Nothing. Can you check...? Call me  
in the morning.

MAXWELL

Good night.

A CLICK, and the little light goes dark.

KIRBY

(Feeble, tiny)  
Could you stay with me?

Then in the distance, an EXPLOSION. An exchange of gunfire  
on a massive scale, but miles and miles away. Beyond the  
horizon, a red glow paints the sky.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Vincent.

The zombies moan louder, and some pound on the windows. The pounding has very little strength, but Kirby flinches anyway.

She wedges herself into the floor space behind the driver's seat, holding her lug wrench defensively.

CUT TO:

28 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - MORNING

28

Kirby sits in the driver's seat, awake, watching the sunrise.

A BEEP. She pushes the Northstar button.

KIRBY

Who is it?

MAXWELL

Are you still drinking water?

KIRBY

I'm alone out here.

MAXWELL

I'm with you. Don't worry. I'm not going anywhere.

KIRBY

No, you jerk. Those sick people. They were here last night. Now they're not.

MAXWELL

Maybe they're planning a surprise party for you.

Kirby drinks another water and lets herself smile.

KIRBY

Listen. I'm going to walk.

MAXWELL

What?

KIRBY

Vincent. He's waiting for me. I'm worried about him.

Maxwell types on his keyboard.

MAXWELL

Stay put.

KIRBY

I can't live forever on popcorn and  
Pepsi.

MAXWELL

Someone will come for you.

Kirby turns on the engine and tries to force the transmission  
into gear. No good.

KIRBY

If I can't drive myself, I'm walking.

MAXWELL

Are you nuts? There are quicker  
ways to suicide.

KIRBY

I'd better get started.

Kirby tightens her shoelaces, and starts tossing water bottles  
into her empty purse.

MAXWELL

It's fifty miles to the next rest  
area!

KIRBY

Not much choice.

MAXWELL

They might come back tonight. Could  
you walk all that way before  
nightfall? And what if it isn't  
safe once you get there?

Kirby watches the last few Undead shamble off. They stroll  
into the desert. Some burrow into the ground. Some just  
shield their eyes from the sun. One is too slow. His eye  
sizzles away.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

And what about if...

KIRBY

I'm not just going to sit here waiting  
to die. I'm all alone, the tow truck  
isn't coming, my car is dead. Vincent  
will wait for me. It's because of  
me he's still in the city.

MAXWELL

If we just monitor the radio, get  
online, I'm sure there are shelters,  
the army...

She slowly opens the door. Takes a look around, and steps out of the SUV.

CUT TO:

29 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY

29

As soon as her foot hits the ground, a ZOMBIE'S HAND shoots out from under the car and grabs her by the ankle.

Kirby falls awkwardly onto the road, her skull bouncing off the pavement.

MAXWELL

Take a deep breath and think about this.

Kirby's head swims, her vision goes blurry, as the zombie pulls her under the SUV.

With a dry moan, the zombie pulls hard on Kirby's leg. She skitters along the pavement, disappearing under the SUV up to her knee.

She groans, and tries to shake the cobwebs loose.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Staying with the SUV is the safest thing you can do.

The zombie grabs on with its other arm, and pulls again. Sinewy muscle ripples under desiccated flesh.

Kirby can't shake its grip, and starts to panic.

The zombie reaches up and grabs Kirby's belt, pulling hard.

Her pants start to slip.

She squirms and fights back, scrabbling to grab hold on to anything.

The zombie's moan gets more eager. Hungry.

KIRBY

Shit!

She grabs on to the side rail of the SUV, and pulls hard.

The zombie yells. Rage? Pain? Could go either way.

He pulls back hard on her pants. Kirby loses her grip and starts to slide underneath again.

MAXWELL

Just flip on the AC and relax while you watch a movie. Something relaxing. You could probably use a good laugh.

The zombie tightens its grip on her waistline, its yellowed nails scraping her belly without breaking the skin.

She kicks at its face, DISLODGING its JAWBONE. Mucus flies from the joint, splattering her skin.

KIRBY

Your mother's tits!

She kicks again and again -- panic seeping in around the edges, but the zombie won't let go.

MAXWELL

Hey, take it easy. I'm just trying to help over here.

She fumbles for her belt buckle, and pops it open. Unbuttons and unzips her pants.

She wiggles her hips out of the pants, and tries to slide away from the zombie, letting her pants slide down her legs.

She scrambles out from under the vehicle, pulling herself up by the open door.

But her pants don't come all the way off.

Ever try to take your pants off with your shoes still on?

Well, it's even more inconvenient if you're grappling with a zombie hiding under your car. Her pants turn inside out, and get stuck on her shoes.

The zombie climbs up her pants, going hand over hand, and grabs her foot, pulling hard.

She jars her jaw on the door, but manages to hang on to the sideview mirror.

The zombie pulls. She pulls back, screaming in rage and terror.

He pulls her down. She grips the sideview more tightly and pulls herself up. With a metallic CREAK, the mirror starts to pry loose from the door.

KIRBY

Let go!

MAXWELL

Who's there?!

The zombie tries to pull her down again. She grits her teeth, and pulls herself back up using the sideview. It GROANS under the strain, and finally BURSTS free of the door.

Kirby hits the street HARD, the side view clattering on the pavement beside her.

KIRBY

Ow.

The zombie has all the leverage now. He pulls at Kirby, his jaw swinging free, his grey tongue flopping around.

Kirby's nails stutter and crack along the street as she fights to hold on to anything. She tries to kick the zombie again, but her legs are tangled in her inside-out pants.

Kirby fights for her life, struggling and grabbing for purchase as if being dragged under by quicksand.

Then her hand catches the broken side view mirror.

She angles the mirror so that it reflects the sunlight into the face of the zombie.

The zombie SCREECHES loud and high-pitched.

MAXWELL

What the hell?

Where the zombie's eyes once were, two bubbling yellow cauldrons now ooze and smoke. It gropes and claws at its destroyed face, finding rotting holes where it once could see.

Leaving her pants in the zombie's grip, Kirby hops to her feet.

Her shoes stay in her pants.

In the middle of the highway, barefoot, in her undies, Kirby jumps for joy.

KIRBY

Yes!

MAXWELL

What is going on!?

Then she gets a good look at the suffering creature.

It squeals and squirms, clawing at its burning face. Kirby's face sinks.

KIRBY

This guy's pretty screwed, Max.

MAXWELL

Who?

KIRBY

He was trying to kill me. Can you dispatch an ambulance?

MAXWELL

Nobody's responding. These people can't be helped or cured. It's all over the Internet... what's left of it.

The zombie's screaming is unbearable. She winces.

KIRBY

Shut up! Please!

Kirby turns away, covers her ears, but the zombie's painful wailing can't be denied.

MAXWELL

You're going to have to...

KIRBY

I can't...

MAXWELL

It's an act of mercy. Nobody should have to live like that. I wouldn't want to.

Kirby shakes her head no, but she walks to the rear of the car, opens the hatch and removes the lug wrench.

Kirby grabs the waistband of her pants, and drags the zombie out from under the car.

She holds the lug wrench aloft, hesitates, then brings it down with a wet THUD. Blackened brain tissue, yellow ooze, and teeth spray on the pavement.

Catching her breath, Kirby sits in the street for a moment.

The pants are covered in zombie leavings, so she abandons them and gets back into the SUV.

CUT TO:

30 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - DAY

30

Kirby puts her head down on the steering wheel.

MAXWELL

Are you okay?

KIRBY

I just killed somebody.

MAXWELL

Do you have a First Aid Kit?

She reaches into her glove compartment and finds her First Aid Kit. Pops it open. It's full of lollipops.

She looks at her hands. They shake like crazy.

She gazes around the desert. Zombies cower from the sun, hiding their sensitive eyes. Some actually burrow into the dirt.

One glances toward the sun, and its eyes burst into a chunky yellow stew. Here and there, zombies -- eyes already destroyed -- wander aimlessly and harmlessly.

KIRBY

Those assholes are sneaky. I need a lifeboat.

There's only one answer. It dawns on her.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Max, looks like you're coming with me.

CUT TO:

31 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY

31

Kirby suits up. Shorts. T-shirt. Hair in a ponytail.

Sneakers laced up tight. Ready for business.

She cracks her knuckles, and leans in, putting all of her weight into the SUV.

She pushes hard, and the vehicle starts to roll. After gingerly stepping past the zombie she destroyed, Kirby pushes the SUV down the road.

Slowly. So slowly.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY

32

The sun brutalizes Kirby as she continues to push the SUV along the freeway. Waves of heat ripple the air above the blacktop.

Every inch of Kirby's body sweats and strains, turning a bright red.

Maxwell's voice calls out from the SUV, through the open windows and sunroof.

MAXWELL

Are you there?

Short of breath, a frog in her throat, Kirby keeps pushing the giant vehicle.

KIRBY

Wishing I'd bought a Prius about now!

MAXWELL

If only.

She huffs and puffs as she continues her slow journey.

KIRBY

How far have I gone?

MAXWELL

Focus on taking care of yourself. If you pass out out there...

KIRBY

Right.

She continues to move the SUV, step by agonizing step. She wipes sweat from her forehead, and keeps moving.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

How are you holding up?

MAXWELL

I'm almost out of all the healthy food in the vending machines.

Kirby strains against the weight of the SUV. Her words come in little stringy bursts.

KIRBY

The Twinkies will keep until the end of the world.

MAXWELL

I think that was yesterday.

A zombie shambles by, eyes burned out. Kirby holds her breath and makes like a statue until it has stumbled awkwardly away.

CUT TO:

33 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY

33

The sun broils anything it shines on. A lizard digs into the dirt, looking for relief. A cactus sizzles. The bones of a dead rodent bleach in the intense heat. Zombies hide their eyes from the sun. Some dig into the dirt for relief.

And grunting with every step, Kirby forces her SUV along the road, not another vehicle in sight.

She collapses, landing awkwardly on the pavement. Some nearby blind zombies react to the sound, but then continue on their way.

Grimacing in pain, she massages her legs. Then she forces herself to her feet and grabs a bottle of water from the car.

While she slugs it back, she sneaks a peek at her supplies.

A six pack of water. A couple of sodas. A Gatorade. Some snacks and treats. Not exactly a cornucopia.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - EVENING

34

The freeway is bathed in orange.

Kirby takes a break. The hot wind of the desert whips her hair around. Her muscles tremble from the long day's work.

MAXWELL

Nice work today. Almost two miles.

KIRBY

This is going to take forever.

MAXWELL

You have dinner reservations or something?

Kirby looks to the horizon. Black smoke plumes to the sky here and there.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

It takes as long as it takes. We'll get through this.

Kirby can't look away. She just watches the distant city burn.

The wind dies down, and the desert is silent. For a moment.

Then a chorus of moans trickles through the air. Quietly at first, and with just one or two voices. Then more. Then more still.

Kirby scans around her. Zombies in the distance, none really close enough to threaten her yet. But a lot more than before.

Thirty or forty of them.

Kirby gives the SUV one last hard push -- it moves an inch -- and sits on the ground, resting her back against the rear bumper.

The zombies' moaning gets louder and closer.

KIRBY

Okay.

CUT TO:

35 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT

35

She reaches down and takes her shoes off, rubbing her feet luxuriously.

There's a little bit of a ruckus in the background from Maxwell's end. Some moaning. Some tapping and scratching.

KIRBY

I'm locked down. Looks like I'll have company tonight.

MAXWELL

Is it bad?

Kirby stretches her legs with a wince, roots around in her purse and finds moisturizer. Rubs it on her legs and arms.

KIRBY

Think I've got a sunburn.

She applies the moisturizer as they talk.

BUMP! A zombie has arrived -- many others follow close behind. The moaning gets louder, as does the scratching on the windows.

MAXWELL

Sounds worse than yesterday.

KIRBY

There are more of them.

The SUV rocks back and forth.

MAXWELL

Here too. They never leave.

KIRBY

Are you safe?

MAXWELL

Got a barricade. Looks sturdy enough.

KIRBY

So... Now what?

CUT TO:

36 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT

36

She eats some Fritos, stretches her sore legs. Zombies fill the windows.

MAXWELL

Let me try one more time.

She rolls her eyes.

KIRBY

Okay. Ready? Open the pod-bay doors,  
Max. Open the pod-bay doors!

Max does a passable impersonation of HAL from "2001."

MAXWELL

I'm sorry, Kirby. I can't do that.

The doors LOCK as if by magic.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

But now you are my prisoner.

They laugh together, a moment of real friendship, finally.

Kirby picks at her sunburn, peels off some skin.

KIRBY

This piece of sunburn I just peeled  
off... It must be at least a foot  
long! Top that!

MAXWELL

I have created a paper clip chain  
all the way across the room. So  
there!

She picks at another juicy chunk of sunburn, and pulls off a  
sheet of skin.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

So. What did you do for a living  
before...?

KIRBY

I'm a dancer.

MAXWELL

Disco?

KIRBY

Ballet.

MAXWELL

Anything I might have seen?

Kirby points her toe, ballet-style.

KIRBY

Do you ever go to the ballet?

MAXWELL

No.

KIRBY

Most people don't.

They sit quietly for a while, the little Northstar indicator  
the only light, the moaning and scratching of zombies the  
only sound.

She peers out the window at the zombie pressed against the  
glass. It wears a tuxedo and a brand new shiny wedding ring.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Max?

MAXWELL

Yeah.

KIRBY

Have you lost anybody? You know...

MAXWELL

I have a wife, a son. No news.

KIRBY  
I'm sorry. I never really...

Maxwell quickly clears his throat and interrupts.

MAXWELL  
How's the food situation?

KIRBY  
Bad. Water too. Also, I don't have much gas left.

MAXWELL  
Should make the pushing easier.

KIRBY  
If I can't recharge the battery, I lose everything.

MAXWELL  
Not everything.

KIRBY  
I lose you.

MAXWELL  
We'll figure this out. Why don't you grab some sleep. I need to strengthen my barricades here.

KIRBY  
Okay.

She inhales to speak, but hesitates.

MAXWELL  
What is it?

KIRBY  
Nothing.

MAXWELL  
Spit it out.

Kirby takes a deep quivering breath.

KIRBY  
I'm not...

She can't go on.

MAXWELL  
Um. Okay. No problem. Let's talk in the morning.

Click. He's gone.

She stretches out in the back of the SUV.

She falls asleep before she knows it, splayed out in a perfect BALLERINA POSE.

She snores and drools in her sleep, and the zombies continue to push against the SUV, scratching at the windows.

As they do, the RUBBER SEAL around the rear windshield begins to BUCKLE slightly against their weight.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY

37

The air itself seems to be sizzling. Kirby is already underway, pushing the SUV along the road.

She groans as she pushes it, clearly forcing her body beyond its natural limits.

The car comes to a halt. Kirby takes the opportunity to drink some water and re-apply sunblock.

Regardless, her skin is an angrier, deeper red than before.

She sits on the bumper. Then looks up at the sun, shielding her eyes.

THUD. A blinded zombie bumps against the SUV. Two more kind of wander in circles directly in front of the car.

Kirby watches, and mimes at them: Shoo! Move it! The zombies have their own ideas.

KIRBY

Screw this.

CUT TO:

38 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - DAY

38

She climbs in the car, cranks the engine on and fires up the air conditioner.

KIRBY

Oh, YEAH!

She revels in the goose bumps and the cold air blowing her hair around.

Kirby squints out the windshield. Off in the distance, a dark spot on the horizon.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Hello.

She squints, but the heat radiating off the road -- and the blind zombies -- obscure the object.

She pushes the Northstar button.

MAXWELL

Hey, Kirby. Everything okay?

KIRBY

There's something out there.

MAXWELL

What?

Kirby squints. The windshield (gummed up with zombie leavings) isn't helping at all, so she pops out of the sunroof, and gazes into the sizzling day.

KIRBY

I don't know. Looks like it's in the road. I'm going to take a look.

MAXWELL

Are you crazy? First rule of being stranded. "Don't abandon the lifeboat."

KIRBY

Quit being such a pussy. I was just... I was just letting you know where I'd be.

Nothing from Maxwell's end of the line except zombies moaning. Some creaking. The sound of wood scraping against concrete.

MAXWELL

I need to fortify my -- fort here. Let me know when you get back. Don't forget to turn off the car.

Kirby clicks off the Northstar, turns off the SUV, and pockets the keys. Checks her watch. It's 5:00.

CUT TO:

39 WEXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY

39

Kirby marches toward the object in the distance, wielding her lug wrench awkwardly.

Her head moves herkily-jerkily, scanning the desert for any lurching zombies.

Some muffled moaning keeps her from getting too comfortable with her safety out here. She passes mile marker 140.

CUT TO:

40 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - EVENING 40

The sun still beats down on her as Kirby passes mile marker 145. The object is coming into focus.

It's big. Like a car.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - EVENING 41

At mile marker 150, the object is clear as day. The police car that pulled her over.

She checks her watch. It's 7:00 now. She checks the sky.

The sun is getting cozy with the horizon.

Kirby approaches the cruiser carefully, lug wrench poised to strike. She peeks in the driver's side. Nothing lurking.

Kirby makes her way around to the front of the cruiser, and finds a stack of zombies crushed into the grill, and against the wheels.

They are all destroyed, but they didn't go easy.

The tires are flat, and one of the wheels is turned sideways.

Looks like the cop took a bunch of the bastards with him.

Her reconnaissance complete, Kirby climbs in to the police cruiser. She grabs the CB radio. Keys the handset.

KIRBY

Hello? Hello? 911?

Nothing. She clicks the handset a few times with no luck. Turns some knobs on the console. No good.

The keys are in the ignition. She tries to crank the motor, but there's nothing.

She checks her watch again, and hurries to salvage what she can from the police car.

A couple bottles of water. A bag of cookies. Some maps.

And reaching under the seat, she finds a gun.

She tosses aside the maps, eats the cookies, jams the water in her pockets, and tests out the gun's heft.

Kirby steps out of the cruiser, ready to head back to her SUV, when...

BEE-BOOP!

The sound of a phone's dying battery freezes her in her tracks.

She spins back to the car and rummages around until, under the drivers' seat, she finds the Deputy's phone.

She quickly dials 911, but before the call can connect, the phone dies.

Kirby checks her watch and then the sun.

She triggers the TRUNK RELEASE LEVER.

Kirby runs around to the rear of the car, and tosses items out of the trunk.

She pulls the Deputy's briefcase out, and dumps it on the road. Tosses aside a magazine (porn) and Tupperware (old and moldy).

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Aha!

With great joy, she produces the phone's charger.

She pockets the charger, jams the gun in her waistband at her back, and grabs her lug wrench.

Checking her watch again, Kirby starts back, walking toward the sunset... then managing to break into a little jog.

CUT TO:

42 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - NIGHT

42

The darkness is stifling as Kirby, now in a dead sprint, tries to reach her SUV. Her breath comes in loud gasps.

Finally, she stops, hands on her knees.

She falls to all fours. Her lug wrench clatters to the road.

Kirby's eyes are big like saucers, unable to see more than an inch in front of her.

And then, barely perceptible, a quiet SCRAPE on the pavement, followed by a distant zombie MOAN.

Kirby's breath catches in her throat. She lies flat on her belly, on the dotted line, perfectly still.

She gingerly reaches around for her lug wrench, but can't find it in the dark.

SHKK. SHKK. The sound of exposed bone dragging on pavement bypasses the ears, and scrapes right up Kirby's spine.

Kirby shudders, despite the heat.

The scraping is followed by a rickety CRASH, like a skeleton in a clothes dryer.

Kirby opens her eyes wider, pleading for some clue as to what's going on.

A moan and some more scrapes follow.

SHKK. SHKK. CRASH! The zombie falls to the ground.

SHKK. SHKK. CRASH! This time Kirby feels the breeze on her leg as the zombie falls very near her.

She reaches out with her hand, and touches a raised reflector on the center line. The kind that make your tires thump when you drive over them.

The zombie gets back up and starts walking, dragging her exposed ankle bone on the ground. When she shambles to another raised reflector, she trips and falls again.

It's DEE.

Instinctively, Kirby spreads her legs, and Zombie Dee clatters to the ground just between her ankles. She moans. Kirby bites her lip to keep from screaming.

Dee struggles to her foot once more, and this time as she trips, she's about to fall right on Kirby. At the last instant, she rolls aside.

Undead Dee hits the pavement hard this time, busting out her teeth. They clatter around Kirby's head.

One tooth -- yellowed and decaying -- bounces in her mouth.

That's the last straw. Spitting, Kirby screams, and points the policeman's gun at the zombie. She recognizes Dee.

KIRBY

Dee?

The zombie's mouth fills with drool and rot as she turns toward the noises Kirby is making.

Kirby spits incoherent growls of fury and sadness as she backs away from Dee.

Skittering backwards across the road on her butt, Kirby manages to stay clear of the zombie's reach, but in the pitch black, she tumbles into the roadside ditch.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Ow! Bite my crank!

A loud, alert MOAN from Zombie Dee. With a raggedy growl, she turns toward Kirby.

The zombie drags its broken-off foot through the breakdown lane, and tumbles into the ditch.

She falls perpendicular to the road, creating a bridge across the ditch with her rotting body.

Old, desiccated ORGANS slide out of her rib cage onto Kirby.

Her face and body recoil.

Zombie Dee, awkwardly spanning the ditch, can't reach Kirby, but that's not stopping her from clutching away.

Kirby reaches for the cop's gun, but it has fallen under her body.

She tries to lift herself up to remove it.

Dee's black and yellow fingernails brush her midsection.

She drops her body flat against the ground. Dee clutches at her.

Kirby grabs Dee's hand. Dee's fingers snap, but she doesn't slow down her attack.

Finally, Kirby wrests her hand free and removes Dee's engagement ring.

And the ring finger.

Black ooze splatters from the wound.

Kirby puts the ring on her finger and punches Dee in the eye. Then again. And again. Finally, Dee falls limp, her brain matter and eye dripping from her engagement ring on Kirby's hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

43 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - MORNING

43

Kirby hops in, slams the door, and locks everything. Cranks the key.

The car starts and the Battery Indicator starts to climb.

KIRBY

Max.

MAXWELL

Who is this?

KIRBY

Marilyn Monroe.

She plugs in her phone right away and turns it on.

MAXWELL

Are you okay?

Kirby rubs her arms, like she feels unclean. She navigates around her phone. Tons of spam in the email, but no real messages.

She dials 911. A loud, fast BUSY SIGNAL.

She chooses VINCENT from her CONTACTS list. Straight to voicemail.

She scrolls through her Contacts. MISTER WOK'S. GYM. GYNO. PIZZA. TAXI. No other friends or family.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

I was worried about you.

Kirby smiles, as if hearing that brings her comfort for the first time in her life.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY

44

Kirby pushes the SUV through the desert, straining to make any kind of progress. She stops for a drink of water and checks the car's gauges. Gas is below E.

The BATTERY INDICATOR isn't below half yet. Resting on the driver's seat, her phone reads CHARGING.

CUT TO:

45 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY 45

Kirby pushes the SUV through a CONSTRUCTION SITE. She yanks on the wheel to navigate through traffic cones.

BZZZ-CHUNK! BZZZ-CHUNK! A big electronic sign reads SPEED LIMIT 30. YOUR SPEED:

It flashes 0. 0. 0. Kirby gives the car a hard push. The sign ticks up to 1.

CUT TO:

46 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT 46

Kirby massages her aching legs, her skin purplish. Zombies surround her, moaning and rocking the car from the outside.

MAXWELL

Your turn.

Kirby clears her throat and recites, just like in the old "Going To A Picnic" game.

KIRBY

Now that society has ended, I am going to miss Airplanes and Bubbly Fun Soda and Christmas and Donuts and Evolution and Fruit Juice and Gumballs aaaand... Hoagies. Now you.

While he talks, we hear Max tappity-tapping on his keyboard.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Hey! Typing is cheating!

MAXWELL

I'm not cheating. I'm just... uh oh.

KIRBY

What?

MAXWELL

Looks like somebody got a speeding ticket.

Kirby groans.

KIRBY

That dick told me he'd let me off with a warning.

MAXWELL

I don't think they'll chase you for  
the fine.

Kirby laughs. A BEEP interrupts. She gropes for the phone.

It reads FULLY CHARGED. Kirby spots an icon on the screen.

She navigates the cursor over it. VIDEO CHAT IN PROGRESS.

She clicks on it. The video chat window opens.

VINCENT'S PLACE. But the room is a complete wreck. The image sways and swoons, giving us the whole tour.

Broken furniture. The window is cracked. A BLOOD-SMEARED sign: I MISS KIRBY.

Kirby looks on in horror, eyes widening.

The jamb is splintered, and the door is ajar. All the room's furniture is shoved aside, a failed barricade.

KIRBY

Oh no. No no no.

The image swings around past the mirror.

Reflected in the mirror is Vincent, now the WALKING DEAD.

His arm is nearly severed below the elbow. The dangling hand swings around by a flap of meat.

In the hand is Vincent's phone. On its screen -- in the mirror -- held by ZOMBIE VINCENT -- on Kirby's phone -- is Kirby's horrified face.

Kirby SCREAMS and drops her phone. She scrambles as far away from the phone as she can. Vincent's voice MOANS all zombified from the phone.

MAXWELL

What's that noise?

Kirby curls into the fetal position and covers her ears.

She rocks back and forth, willing the world to go away.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Kirby? Kirby?

CUT TO:

- 47 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY 47
- Kirby slowly pushes her SUV past Dee's final resting place. A pile of rocks and makeshift cross mark the grave Kirby created for her. Dee's ring sits atop the marker.
- She looks terrible. Skin an angry red, big bags under her eyes. If the eyes are the window to the soul, Kirby needs a priest, stat.
- CUT TO:
- 48 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT 48
- Kirby's face is slack, her head bouncing around loosely as the zombies rock the car.
- The seal on her REAR WINDOW continues to GIVE, but she doesn't notice. In fact, she looks like she'd be hard-pressed to come up with her own name.
- She reaches for the window lever, and lowers the window a tiny amount. Zombie fingers reach in around the glass, and she moves her face very close to them. Closes her eyes.
- Her finger trembles over the lever. One little push, and this could all be over.
- At the last moment, she raises the window again. Severed zombie fingers fall into the car.
- CUT TO:
- 49 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - DAY 49
- Kirby pushes the SUV around the police cruiser, struggling with the steering wheel.
- CUT TO:
- 50 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT 50
- Despite zombies filling the SUV's windows, Kirby looks at the picture of Vincent on her phone ("I miss Kirby"), and opens the sun roof. She climbs out, on top of the SUV.
- CUT TO:
- 51 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - NIGHT 51
- Standing above the army of shamblers surrounding her, she closes her eyes. Puts her arms out, stage-diving style. Cranes her head back. She's ready to give up. She opens her eyes.

MAXWELL

Kirby?

This breaks the spell. She gyrates and regains her balance before losing it again and getting wedged in her sunroof, butt-first.

KIRBY

Yeah.

MAXWELL

What are you doing?

Kirby goes from catatonia to Bill Paxton in "Aliens" in a heartbeat.

KIRBY

They got Vincent. They got everyone. It's over. It's all over. I'm going to die alone out here because of my damn clutch.

She yanks free of the sunroof and positions herself to leap into the zombie horde.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I'm done, Max. I'm just going to jump and...

MAXWELL

No.

Kirby checks out the zombies, filthy, gross, painful.

KIRBY

Maybe you're right. My sleeping pills might make more sense.

She moves from the edge and lowers herself through the sunroof.

CUT TO:

52 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT

52

The zombies filling the windows, Kirby reaches for the glove compartment. Pops it open.

MAXWELL

We're going to make it. Together. You hear me? You don't go to Vincent. You come to me. Grab a pen.

Kirby's hand hesitates.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Grab a pen and write this down. I'm giving you my address and you're coming to get me.

Kirby makes a fist. Closes her eyes.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Come on. Come find me. We can go for a ride in my Anal Odyssey!

She half laugh/half cries.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

You got that pen?

Kirby reaches past her sleeping pills and snags a pen and her Users' Manual from the glove compartment instead.

CUT TO:

53 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - NIGHT

53

Kirby sits quietly, watching the zombies outside. Two buff lifeguard corpses arrive and join the party.

KIRBY

Uh oh.

MAXWELL

What?

KIRBY

Swim at your own risk at the Ramada Inn. No lifeguards on duty.

Max hesitates.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Max?

MAXWELL

I need to tell you something.

Sneaks a peak at the gauges. The battery power is VERY LOW.

She starts the engine.

The battery begins to recharge, but the LOW FUEL light comes on, turning Kirby's face (and everything else in the darkened SUV) a bloody red.

KIRBY

Whenever anyone says that, it means you want to confess something or declare something. And all I want to hear is that they found a cure...

She cranes around to the back seat and assesses her supplies.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

... and that it can be made out of Cherry-Vanilla soda and pretzels.

MAXWELL

That's not what I was going to tell you.

KIRBY

Then let's do this later, okay? I'm low on juice, and I don't want our last... I'm going to be on my own soon, and... I'm not...

MAXWELL

Okay. I get it.

Kirby, her face a horrible dark bloodstained color (from the sunburn and the Low Fuel light), stares into the night through the windshield, trying to see beyond the zombies.

But past the zombies, there's nothing.

KIRBY

You know, that guy in the Realm. He wrote "Only two things kill you any more. The other is boredom." But he was wrong. The other one's loneliness.

MAXWELL

You will do fine alone.

KIRBY

I've spent most of my life alone. Never been lonely before.

MAXWELL

It won't be long. You're coming over, right?

Kirby holds onto the scrap of paper with Maxwell's address on it like it's the One Ring To Rule Them All. Her one scrap of hope.

They sit in silence together for a minute.

KIRBY

I'm going to conserve the gas.

MAXWELL

Right.

This is where they both want to say "I love you," but don't do it.

She clicks off the Northstar, then twists the key to OFF. The car goes black.

CUT TO:

54 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - MORNING

54

Kirby wakes up -- but only technically. She peels her dry tongue from her parched mouth and winces at every knotted muscle and deep purple sunburn.

The sun hasn't crested the horizon yet, but the sky is getting light. Pink clouds herald the new day. Instinctively, the zombies move away from the growing light.

Kirby gathers up her shoes and socks. She punches the button to call Maxwell. The connection goes live, but Maxwell is talking to someone else.

MAXWELL

Suze. Suze. Suze. It's going to be okay. Susan. We're going to get through this. I'm so glad to hear your voice. Put Luke on. Luke! Hey, Buddy. How are you? Yeah. I'm scared, too. But it's okay. Mommy will keep you safe. Well, that man is scared, too, and sometimes scared people, they say silly things.

Maxwell's voice is overwhelmed with emotion. He laughs and cries and talks and hyperventilates all at the same time.

Kirby puts her shoes and socks on, and twists the top off her sunscreen bottle.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Okay, pal. I know. But Mommy's right. You need to share the phone. I'll talk to you again soon, Luke. I'll see you soon. I love you, Son.

A tiny beep, and all that's left is a significantly larger number of moaning voices than before.

Kirby listens for a little, using her car's dipstick to scrape the last of the sunscreen out of the bottle.

KIRBY

Max?

Maxwell snuffles.

MAXWELL

I forgot you were there. Sorry you had to hear all that.

Kirby rubs her eyes, runs her hand through her hair.

KIRBY

Your family is alive? That's great.

MAXWELL

They're in a church basement. About a dozen survivors. Land line phone. They've been in contact with maybe twenty or thirty more people.

KIRBY

That's all? A few dozen?

MAXWELL

There are rumors that there's a secure refugee camp maybe fifty miles from here. A few thousand people, they say...

Max takes a long pause.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

I'm going to get them.

KIRBY

No!

Loud CRASHES and CRACKS tumble through the speaker like rocks landsliding down a hill. Kirby covers her mouth in horror.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Max!

A loud, chunky snuffle, followed by...

MAXWELL

Still here. They're three blocks away. Might as well be the moon.

KIRBY

Tell me about Luke.

Silence. Then, finally, some quiet sobbing.

MAXWELL

He was so scared and confused.

KIRBY

Not that. Does he play any sports?

Maxwell's voice loses its edge. He's calming down.

MAXWELL

Math whiz. His teachers love him.

KIRBY

The pride of... where does he go to school?

MAXWELL

Arthur Sinclair Middle School.

KIRBY

The pride of Arthur Sinclair Middle School! And of his Dad.

MAXWELL

Damn right. He loves school, too. Never had a problem getting out of bed. We would watch the sun rise together. It was our special time.

KIRBY

He's going to make it. We all are. You, me, your family... and we're going to go live with the other survivors. Watch the sun rise with Luke in a safe place.

MAXWELL

How?

KIRBY

How do we survive anything? Plagues, wars, famine...

She takes a look out the window at the zombies shambling into the desert.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

We are a species that endures. Look out the window. Even death doesn't stop us any more.

Maxwell's voice catches in his throat.

MAXWELL

The daring rescue, an inspirational speech? That's your big plan?

KIRBY

I figure I can be the square-jawed, principled hero who plays by her own rules, while you can be the plucky comic relief.

MAXWELL

I don't even know you.

KIRBY

You know me better than anyone. Except...

MAXWELL

Except?

KIRBY

I'm not really a dancer. I mean, I am. I was. I tried to be. I'm sorry I lied. I haven't been to an audition in months. Dancing could have made me special. I'm just another Hollywood failure. But you... you have a family. You've made a difference. You've been here for me. You're a bona fide hero.

MAXWELL

I never called your tow truck.

That feeling of good-natured hope? That joking camaraderie? That emotional bond they had built? Kiss it goodbye.

KIRBY

What?

MAXWELL

I was going to make you wait a few hours, cool your heels.

Kirby is stung. She looks like someone punched her in the stomach. With a bowling ball. The dash lights flicker.

Kirby tries to start the car, but the engine won't catch.

The LOW FUEL light scolds her. The BATTERY POWER indicator is nearly bottomed out.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

I realize it's a dick move... But your car... I mean... seriously, you have an obvious fondness for road trips of more than 200 miles. You have to own that SUV? We all share this planet you know. Why did you have to be so selfish?

KIRBY

Me! Max...

MAXWELL

I hate being called Max!

Kirby just stares at the BATTERY POWER indicator until the light completely fades.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

It was just going to be a little while!

Kirby punches the Northstar speaker.

KIRBY

Goodbye, MAX.

MAXWELL

Kirby, I'm...

With a staticky WHOOSH, Maxwell is gone. Kirby tries the ignition again. Nothing this time. The car is completely dead.

Kirby cracks open a bottle of water from the cop's car -- only one left. Slugs the whole thing down, and jumps from the car.

CUT TO:

55 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY 55

Kirby leans into the back of the SUV, the day slowly getting underway. She grumbles a subvocal tirade against Maxwell.

CUT TO:

56 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY 56

Pushing backward against the SUV, the slow, slow progress continues. She sits on the bumper as the vehicle's momentum evaporates.

A blind zombie shuffles by. She creeps up behind it and shoves it in the ravine with all her might, grunting:

KIRBY  
Customer service representative, my  
sunburned ass.

CUT TO:

57 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY 57

High noon. The desert might as well be a brick pizza oven.

Kirby, her face a mask of righteous fury, pushes along, fueled by anger.

CUT TO:

58 INT. KIRBY'S SUV - EVENING 58

Kirby climbs in for the night. Through the windows, zombies slowly close in on the SUV.

Her eyes are wild, her breath comes in ragged sighs.

A creature of instinct and habit now, Kirby's hand punches the Northstar call button practically on its own.

No ring, no response, no nothing. The car has NOT come back to life.

The zombies arrive. A nub of bone scrapes the paint job.

Inside, her dry tongue scrapes along parched lips. No moisture here.

Her fingers -- cracked and blistered -- manage to wrap around the phone and draw it to her. Her head resting against the window, she can't gather the strength to turn her head.

She holds the phone in front of her face, and scrolls around, the skin of her fingers splitting as she presses on the scroll wheel.

The phone brings up Kirby's email: DOWNLOADING 200 MESSAGES.

KIRBY  
Signs of life.

The emails drift in: Spam. Spam. Spam. Spam. Spam. All spam.

She coughs, a slight dry little puff.

KIRBY (CONT'D)  
Ugh.

Takes off her shoes. Her feet bleed from angry blisters. Her toes are twisted and swollen. She cringes as she rubs them. A toenail falls off.

Her face, illuminated by the phone, reflects in the car window. Her face is ashen and slack. The phone goes to "sleep." Now she's looking right in the face of a zombie.

But who can tell the difference between them?

Finally, Kirby pops open her glove compartment. Reaches for the bottle of water - past it - and grabs her sleeping pills.

She grabs the water. Opens it. Takes a moment. Eyes the inch of water left in the bottom.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

That's it.

She sets it in the SUV's drink holder.

The zombies outside tilt their heads. Curious. Something familiar to them -- the final moments of life.

One of them -- ligature bruises around her neck -- leans in and rests her face on the outside of the window.

She moans, raspy and sad. Kirby responds in kind.

She licks her lips. It sounds like corn husks rubbing against each other. Eyes the water.

With great effort and a wince she ignores the popping blisters on her hand as she twists open the pill bottle.

Knocks them all back like a tequila shooter.

And drinks the rest of the water. Looks at it, confused. Could it all be gone so soon? With barely any strength, she tosses the bottle aside. It joins the pile on the floor.

Then she sits back and closes her eyes. Waiting for death. And the ensuing undeath.

She sighs heavily. The pain is fading.

CRASH!

The rear windshield gives way under the pressure of the zombie horde outside.

Rotting flesh sloughs from them and into her car. Their rickety arms grope.

Kirby's eyes don't snap open exactly. What they do is best described as drooping open.

She screams -- a whisper really -- and manages to ooze onto the floor under the steering wheel.

The car rocks as the scent of fresh meat incites the zombies outside.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Whuh.

She lolls her head against the console, the pills doing their job, when she spots something under the water bottles.

Something metallic. Black. Deadly.

Moving as if she's swimming in gravy, Kirby gropes for the cop's gun and struggles to hold it aloft.

Aims it best she can. Pulls the trigger. Nothing.

Her face goes all question-marky, and she focuses on the gun, trying to comprehend.

One of the zombies climbs on the rear bumper and forces himself in the rear windshield. Kirby hangs her head, resigned.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

How's my hair look?

The zombie responds with a hungry moan. Kirby gives it a wan grin, and closes her eyes. For the last time?

"My Ding-A-Ling" by Chuck Berry fills the car, momentarily drowning out the moans coming from the cargo area.

Kirby is even more baffled now. She holds the gun to her ear. The music stops.

She holds the cool metal against her face and smiles.

The song starts up again.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Vincent?

Kirby sings along. Nods her head to the rhythm. Then sees her crotch is glowing blue. This is quite curious.

She reaches around down there, and out from under her body, she produces her glowing phone, the ring tone much louder now.

It couldn't be any more amazing to her if her vagina was a magician's hat.

The screen reads UNKNOWN CALLER.

Kirby hits the button.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Hello.

MAXWELL

Kirby! Don't hang up!

KIRBY

(slurring)

Don't hang up. Who is this?

MAXWELL

What's going on? Are you okay?

Zombies surround the car. The cargo area is now full of clambering, shambling ghouls.

If the one in front wasn't clearly the victim of some catastrophic accident, they'd have overwhelmed her already. As it is, his mangled awkwardness stems the undead tide -- but the dam is buckling.

KIRBY

Sorry. Full car. You're going to have to take the next one.

MAXWELL

Get out of there. Get on top.

KIRBY

That's what she said.

MAXWELL

Listen to me. The sunroof.

Kirby reaches up. Pushes the button to open the sunroof. No power, no power windows.

KIRBY

No can do, Unknown Caller.

For some reason this strikes her as hilarious. She howls.

MAXWELL

There's a manual crank! Right next to the button. Pry that panel off.

KIRBY

After I sleep.

Her eyes wobble in her skull.

MAXWELL

No sleeping! Pry that panel off,  
and open the sunroof.

Kirby sticks out her lower lip, trying to charm her way out of having to do this.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Vincent's here. He's waiting for  
you to come to him.

Her face contorts. Like she's crying, but dehydration has robbed her of tears.

KIRBY

Vincent?

MAXWELL

You won't get to see him unless you  
get up on the roof of your car. Do  
you hear me? Get out there!

KIRBY

He's on the roof?

Kirby lunges into the driver's seat. The zombies start to clamber into the back seat. She screams.

Quickly, she fumbles with the panel and the crank.

Rotting fingers scratch at her sunburned flesh. A skater boy zombie and a tattooed skater chick bump into each other. He rolls his sole remaining eye toward Kirby.

CUT TO:

59 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - NIGHT

59

Finally, Kirby opens the sunroof enough to slither out.

She drops the phone and the gun on the roof, then reaches inside and cranks the sunroof closed. She leaves a gap just wide enough to retract her arm.

Needy fingers search and scratch through the sunroof.

KIRBY

Assholes.

MAXWELL

Kirby. You sound funny. Did you  
take your pills? I need you to do  
something else for me.

KIRBY

You can come to my house. I'm sorry  
I push you away.

There's too much truth in that apology. She puts her head on her knees and covers her ears.

Looks to the sky. Squints her eyes, making a wish. She wants a do-over for her whole life.

MAXWELL

I need you to stick your fingers all  
the way down your throat.

KIRBY

Not hungry.

MAXWELL

Do it now!

She gets on all fours and induces vomiting. It's sludgy - and contains a fistful of half-digested pills.

Then she rests her face on the roof of the car, breathing heavily.

The zombies around the car can't reach her. She's safe for the moment.

Desiccated fingers reach up through the sunroof, and scabble for anything to grab. Kirby scoots to a safe spot.

After catching her breath, she looks around. She is on an island in a sea of the Undead.

A crowd at least fifty zombies deep surrounds the car.

She puts the phone on Speaker.

KIRBY

Holy shit, Max.

MAXWELL

Are you all right?

She scans around. Zombies. Then miles of unforgiving desert. Then the dark, smoky wreckage of a distant city.

KIRBY

Except for everything.

CUT TO:

60 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - MORNING

60

Kirby, still a sunburned, chapped mummy, sleeps in the fetal position on the roof, rocked gently by the zombies trapped in her car. She has her thumb in her mouth, but without saliva, she doesn't suck on it.

With a tearing sound, she pulls dry thumb skin from the dry roof of her dry mouth. Wakes up, one eye at a time.

She sits up, old, doughy vomit in her hair. She does the best she can to scrape it out.

Hits the CALL button on her phone.

MAXWELL

Hi.

KIRBY

Benedict Arnold, I presume. Can I speak to Maxwell, please?

MAXWELL

I swear if I could do it all over...

Slowly, carefully, she peers in through the sunroof. Zombies fill the car.

KIRBY

Huh. Sits ten comfortably. I thought that was bullshit.

Maxwell laughs.

MAXWELL

Can I call you some help?

Kirby grimaces as the zombies shuffle into the desert, chased off by the sun.

There are a lot more than there were in the beginning. That's zombie apocalypses for you.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Too soon?

KIRBY

Looks like it's time to abandon my lifeboat.

She slides down the windshield and awkwardly plops to the ground. Starts to walk away, and takes a moment. Turns back, and puts her hand on the hood, honoring a fallen comrade.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

A moment of silence.

And she starts walking. Her gait is wobbly, but considering she isn't pushing a 1.5-ton vehicle, her pace is much brisker than usual.

After a few tentative, wincing steps, she gets into a good pace.

CUT TO:

61 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - AFTERNOON

61

Kirby walks slowly, sneaking up on something. She pulls the gun from her waistband, holds it in front of her awkwardly, like she's seen in the movies.

Her target: DEE'S RV.

The side door sits open, CREAKING loudly in the weak desert breeze.

Kirby points the gun at the vehicle the whole time as she does a little reconnaissance on this gift.

Her cracked fingers scrape against the trigger guard. When she gets around to the passenger's side, she gazes in. The keys are in the ignition.

Between the seats, a styrofoam cooler tempts her to rush.

She would drool if she could.

Shaking now, Kirby's hands make the gun rattle. She approaches the driver's side, and peers in.

The upholstery has some rips in it. The rear view is askew.

But beyond that, the coast appears to be clear.

She gets in the RV, and turns the key. VROOM! It purrs like a kitten.

Just like that, Kirby has found hope again. She tosses the phone and the gun on the passenger seat, and laughs.

She reaches across the seat and closes the passenger door -- knocking the gun to the floor -- before closing her own, then spins and pops open the cooler.

No food, but enough ice has melted to leave a few inches of water in the bottom.

She scoops water into her mouth with her dry, blistered hands.

This dirty, bloody water is pure ecstasy. She cranks up the air conditioner and nearly dies from the pleasure.

Her hair -- stringy and vomit-caked -- flops around.

She grabs the phone, hits REDIAL.

MAXWELL

Yeah.

KIRBY

Good news, Max.

Behind her, the bathroom door opens. A tiny grey hand reaches around the door, its yellowed nails broken and chipped.

MAXWELL

What's that noise?

Kirby checks the gas gauge. Half a tank. Good enough. She revs the engine.

KIRBY

I'm coming to get you.

MAXWELL

You are?

KIRBY

And together we're going to get your family. Got it?

Little Tyler jerks out of the bathroom.

With the air conditioner, the engine, and the phone call, Kirby doesn't hear a thing.

Behind the boy, the latrine has been turned into a little fort.

A pillow, comic books, empty water bottles. The sad vestiges of parents' hopes to keep their baby safe from the horror.

The child zombie hisses and creeps toward Kirby.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Sit tight.

MAXWELL

Please hurry. Things here aren't...

Kirby's head snaps back against the car seat. Her phone clatters to the floor.

Kirby screams and gropes around behind her head.

The boy snaps at her, teeth CLACKING hard, but the seat back prevents him from biting Kirby.

They struggle like this, Kirby held tight by her hair, the hungry zombie child thwarted by the seat.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

What's happening?

KIRBY

Son of a bitch has me by the hair!

She screams and struggles some more, then spots the gun on the floor. She stretches. No good.

Kirby leans forward, strains against the surprisingly strong tiny zombie.

With a sound like velcro, a huge vomit-matted chunk of her hair pulls from her skull, leaving the child disappointed, but also free to move.

Kirby lunges for the gun, grabs it, opens her door, and falls out of the RV on her butt.

She stands. Heroic pose in full effect. The zombie child crawls from the car and moves toward her. She points the gun right at his face. Like an action hero, she quips...

KIRBY (CONT'D)

In your face.

She pulls the trigger.

Nothing happens.

So she hits the kid in the face with the barrel of the gun.

The zombie hits the ground, unfazed, and bites her on the ankle. Damned ankle-biters. Kirby screams.

MAXWELL

Are you okay!?

Kirby climbs back into the driver's seat, out of reach for the little guy.

KIRBY

He bit me! This stupid gun won't work!

MAXWELL

Is the safety on?

Kirby tilts the gun, and shakes her head.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

Kirby flips the safety, and gazes at the BITE WOUND. Not much blood, but the edges are already turning gray.

KIRBY

Not yet.

A single gun shot and it's all over.

CUT TO:

62 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY

62

Kirby sits by the side of the road, a campfire burning. She examines the bite wound. It is turning black.

Infected is the nicest thing you could say. Festering would be more accurate. She looks to the sky.

Kirby's phone sits beside her in front of the fire. It's almost romantic.

KIRBY

You know things are bad when a girl can't even get attention from the vultures.

MAXWELL

It's just supply and demand.

She smiles, gazes into the fire.

KIRBY

This is going to suck.

She reaches toward the fire, then pulls her hand back.

MAXWELL

Consensus online is that this works.

KIRBY

Yeah.

MAXWELL

And don't forget...

KIRBY

Yeah.

MAXWELL

You're not alone. Not anymore.

KIRBY

Yeah.

Grabbing a big stick, Kirby drags something out of the fire:  
A tire iron, the metal glowing red.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

You with me, Maxwell?

MAXWELL

Call me Max.

She smiles, squints her eyes, and lays the hot metal on her ankle, cauterizing the wound. The necrotic flesh melts away leaving a burn scar -- relatively healthy, all things considered.

She screams in agony, then passes out.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Kirby? You're going to be okay.  
I'm going to stay right here until  
you wake up.

CUT TO:

63 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY

63

The fire has mostly burned itself out now. Kirby, still out cold, sprawls on the hardpan.

In contrast to the red embers and pinkening sky, the phone's blue glow looks like a lighthouse beacon.

MAXWELL

"To transfer a call, press TRANSFER, then dial the extension. Then press TRANSFER again." You know, this sounds like dry stuff the first time you read it, but there are real nuanced turns of phrase here. Anyway, back to our story: Apparently, the chapter on conference calling will have you on the edge of your seat.

Through the speaker of Kirby's phone, another phone rings. Kirby doesn't budge.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Hello? Honey, what's...

Max is silent as he listens.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Luke! Luke! Where's Mommy? No.  
Oh no. Under a table, under  
something. Please. No. Oh no.

He continues on like this, escalating panic in his voice.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Luke! LUKE!

Then silence. Then crying.

Kirby remains unconscious -- the only way we know she isn't  
dead is that she hasn't gotten up and walked around.

Maxwell cries.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Son. I'm sorry.

The moaning and scratching of the zombies get louder through  
the phone's speaker. Then loud scraping... the sounds of  
the systematic deconstruction of a barricade.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Kirby. Are you awake? Okay. Hang  
on.

He clicks off the line. Her phone beeps -- INCOMING CALL.

It beeps again.

Again. A long pause.

Kirby twitches and groans. A nightmare is underway.

Finally, Maxwell clicks back on.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Hello?

Nothing.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Okay. Come and get it.

Breaking glass. A creaking hinge.

And total fucking chaos.

Breaking furniture, scraping metal. The moaning gets loud  
and insistent. Maxwell SCREAMS.

Then nothing but shambling and moaning.

CUT TO:

64 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - EVENING 64

Kirby comes to, the phone dark beside her, the embers from her fire illuminating the evening.

All around her, zombies approach. She forces herself to her feet, grabs the phone and gun, and struggles to the RV. She climbs in, shuts the door, and starts the engine.

She tries the phone. Dead.

KIRBY  
I'm coming, Max.

Kirby cranks the AC, jams the RV into gear, hits the gas, and peels out.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. GAS STATION - DAY 65

Kirby fills the RV with fuel. In the convenience store, zombies in Subway uniforms try to exit, but can't manage the automatic doors.

Hundreds of MISSING PERSONS FLYERS cover the wall on both sides of the door.

Leaving the RV fueling, she struts toward the convenience store. Activates the door. Shoots a zombie. The doors close. Activates the door. Shoots a zombie. Enters the convenience store.

CUT TO:

66 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - EVENING 66

In a sedan now, she speeds along. The car is loaded with water: bottles, gallon jugs, you name it.

On the seat beside Kirby, a ROAD ATLAS sits open, bloody fingerprints surrounding a yellow HIGHLIGHTER'S course.

Kirby takes a pull on a 64 oz. cup. With a calm turn, she takes an EXIT and punches the accelerator.

CUT TO:

67 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY 67

Kirby moves from aisle to picked-over aisle, seeking supplies.

She wears a bandoleer across her chest, but instead of ammo, it holds stainless steel water bottles.

Something CLINKS behind her. She spins, and the stainless steel bottles CLANK noisily. Three zombies hear the noise and shamle over. Kirby dispatches them, but hears more moaning. Time to go. She flees, leaving the supplies behind.

CUT TO:

68 INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

68

Outside, zombies surround the building. Inside, Kirby has every light on. The place is so bright it could be seen from space.

The store is a wreck, picked over by panicked hordes. The cockroaches are running things now.

Sitting on a checkout counter, she dresses her wounds. Five or six zombie bites, all CAUTERIZED. She wraps them with ACE BANDAGES.

A case of water sits open beside her. The stainless steel bottles on her bandoleer have been replaced by NALGENE bottles.

Kirby eyes a couple of blind zombies, roaming aimlessly among the rotting vegetables.

With the deputy's gun, she takes aim. Fires. One zombie gets it in the shoulder.

She reloads and tries again. Target practice. Once her clip is expended, she reloads.

Grabs a pouch of INSTANT BREAKFAST. Pours it into one of her Nalgenes. She drinks the whole "meal," then refills the Nalgene immediately from a Gatorade bottle beside her.

CUT TO:

69 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

69

Kirby pulls into a Rest Area, and secures her car to sleep for the night. Drinks two bottles of water. Eats a bag of jerky.

Kirby tends to her sunburn. Rips into a brand-new pair of scissors. Uses them to cut her hair short.

She's starting to look healthy again.

CUT TO:

- 70 INT. LEATHER GOODS STORE - DAY 70
- Kirby suits up. With the leather goods and a couple of guns, she is no longer afraid of killing. She's Mad fucking Max.
- CUT TO:
- 71 EXT. SCENIC OVERLOOK - EVENING 71
- Kirby aims and fires the cop's gun. Miss.
- She closes one eye and sizes up the row of beer cans lined up on the white stripe marking the breakdown lane.
- She aims again. Fires. CLANK! A can goes flying. She smiles. Tries to spin the gun, cowboy-style. Drops it.
- Catches it by the hot barrel. Drops it again.
- CUT TO:
- 72 INT. CAMPING SUPPLY STORE - DAY 72
- A dead zombie at her feet, Kirby finds a backpack, a case of MREs, and some good boots. Returns to her car.
- CUT TO:
- 73 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY 73
- Kirby reads a book, clearly targeted at kindergartners. A smiling cartoon holds a gun. GUN SAFETY FOR KIDS!
- Six beer cans lined up along the yellow line. Six shots.
- Six direct hits. Kirby checks the gun, holsters it, and gets in the car.
- CUT TO:
- 74 INT. SEDAN - NIGHT 74
- Kirby pulls into the parking lot, peering around, now a genuine goddamned zombie-killing soldier who patrols the American Southwest.
- With a military general's war-weathered eye, she scans the area for danger spots.
- She parks the car in the middle of the lot, ignoring the painted lines, putting as much distance between herself and potential zombie nests as possible.

She glances at her phone, then looks to the sky. In the east, a pinkish hue creeps into the blackness.

CUT TO:

75 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

75

Kirby pops the trunk, jams the cop's gun in her waistband, and then produces a shotgun as well. Checks the breach, cocks the gun expertly.

Kirby scans her surroundings. A stray dog sniffs at some garbage. Kirby aims.

KIRBY

Good boy.

The dog looks up, wags its tail, and gets back to sniffing.

Kirby leaves it alone.

She scans the parking lot. Among the abandoned vehicles, a HONDA ODYSSEY MINI-VAN. It sports a bumper sticker:

MY CHILD WON THE MATH FAIR AT ARTHUR SINCLAIR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Hey, Max.

Another glance toward her phone -- checking the time -- and she heads toward the building.

CUT TO:

76 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

76

Kirby enters, head on a swivel. She trains her gun on every dark corner as she crosses the lobby and checks the directory.

Cockroaches skitter away in every direction. NORTHSTAR CALL CENTER. B-15.

She moves to the elevator and presses the call button. Trains her gun on the door. PING! It opens.

A zombie -- its eyes turned to butterscotch running down its cheeks -- shuffles around inside.

Without a moment's hesitation, she puts one in its head. Down it goes.

From an ankle-holster, Kirby produces a knife. Jams the elevator door open with it.

She pushes open the door to the STAIRS. Covers the upstairs. Clear. Heads down to Level B.

CUT TO:

77 INT. OFFICE BUILDING BASEMENT - NIGHT 77

Kirby reaches down with her foot and opens the door's latch. Swings it open with her toe -- those ballerina skills really coming in handy now.

Two zombies lurch through the door. Pop. Pop. Done and done. Stepping over them, she heads to the Northstar Call Center.

CUT TO:

78 INT. NORTHSTAR CALL CENTER - NIGHT 78

Kirby enters the office. The lights fritz and pop. The place is a wreck. Kirby clears the room and makes her way behind the receptionist desk. Scans the buttons on the phone.

MAXWELL B.

She pushes the button. A phone rings across the office. Kirby makes her way toward the ringing phone. Quickly but carefully, following a paper clip chain that snakes across the cubicles. A glance to the clock on the wall, hanging askew, covered in spit balls.

When she's at the cubicle next to Maxwell's, she hesitates. Swallows.

Finally, she collects herself and enters Maxwell's workspace.

She takes the phone off the hook to end the call, and puts her gun down as she spots a picture on the desk.

She sees Maxwell for the first time -- and so do we. In a picture with his son. Max holds a baseball glove. Luke holds a calculator.

MAXWELL is an average-looking fellow. You would never know from looking at him that through force of will and his strong voice, he would save Kirby from a zombie apocalypse.

KIRBY

Come out, come out wherever you are.

No sign of life. Or afterlife.

She turns back to the phone, punches SPEAKER, and hits REDIAL.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

(Peppy, chipper, a  
lifetime ago)

Hi! You've reached Kirby's voicemail!  
I'm really sorry I missed your call,  
but I will call you back! I promise!  
Leave a message.

BEEP!

Kirby pauses and punches her pass code.

VOICEMAIL

You have... ONE ... saved message.

Kirby punches the VOLUME button on the phone, cranks it as  
loud as it can go. Then waits, vigilant, gun trained.

MAXWELL

(on voicemail)

Kirby, I'm sorry, but I'm not going  
to be able to meet you in person.

CUT TO:

79 EXT. TRANS-BADLANDS FREEWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

79

Kirby lies unconscious, having just cauterized her wound.

The embers glow beside her.

The phone glows blue, like a lighthouse beacon.

MAXWELL (V.O.)

I know you can never forgive me for  
stranding you in the desert. But I  
hope I redeemed myself in some small  
way guiding you home. I'm afraid I  
was dishonest with you one more time.  
My wife and I split years ago. We  
only ever talked about Luke. I hid  
from other women, other people. I  
don't know what the world is going  
to look like once this whole thing  
is over. But I hope you find someone  
to share it with.

Behind Kirby, a ZOMBIE stumbles out of the Employee Kitchen.

She sighs, sad. Checks her phone. Puts it down, and readies  
her weapon.

MAX looks like he's been pulled to pieces by the zombie horde.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

I kind of wish it could be me. But it won't be. It's over for me, Kirby. Without Luke, my only legacy is your survival. The only hope I have of making the world a better place is if you do it for me.

ZOMBIE MAXWELL lurches toward Kirby. Kirby changes the dressing on one of her burn scars, a smart warrior now, utilizing downtime to get patched up.

She goes through Maxwell's desk, finds a First Aid kit. Pops it open. It's full of gumballs.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Now do me one last favor. Join the fight. Rejoin humanity.

She pops a gumball in her mouth, savors it, then turns to face her undead friend.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Kill some of those sons of bitches for me. And if you get the chance...

Kirby licks her lips. Her eyes go sad. She moves toward him, careful to keep the cubicle partition between them -- safety first.

KIRBY

Come on, Max.

She backs away from him, making sure he's close enough to follow. He stays with her as she moves toward the window.

MAXWELL

Show me a little mercy.

She maneuvers through the office until her back is against the windows, the blinds closed.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

You were right. Only two things kill you anymore. And the other one's loneliness.

She looks to the wall clock, and observes the orange light making stripes through the blinds. Dawn.

KIRBY

One last sunrise, Max.

She pulls the blinds, and the sun shines in. Max winces. And smiles a moment. He falls to his knees.

Kirby stands behind him, pushes his head forward, and quickly inserts a knife behind his ear.

Max goes limp.

She checks Max's body. He's gone. She hugs the dead thing. Gets a little misty, then respectfully lays him on his back. She crosses his arms, placing the photo of Max and his son over his heart.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

MAXWELL

Let yourself care about any people you meet, Kirby. They are rare as gold nowadays. And if you make it to my office, I left you a present in the break room.

VOICEMAIL

End of message.

Kirby presses a button.

VOICEMAIL (CONT'D)

Message already saved.

KIRBY

Rest easy, Max.

Kirby walks into the break room. Casual, but she has her hand on her gun.

CUT TO:

80 INT. NORTHSTAR CALL CENTER BREAK ROOM - MORNING 80

The room is picked bare, except for some optimistic roaches. In the middle of the table, a TOY TOW TRUCK. With a note: I OWED YOU ONE.

And MapQuested directions to a REFUGEE CAMP.

Kirby smiles, takes her present, and leaves, gun held out in front.

CUT TO:

81 INT. NORTHSTAR CALL CENTER - MORNING 81

Kirby collects the gumballs. In the top left drawer, she finds Max's keys.

CUT TO:

82 EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

82

Kirby emerges, letting her guard down a little as she exits into the safety of sunlight.

She moves her supplies into Max's Odyssey, starts the car, and hits the radio.

Statically chatter from the speaker. Someone alive has gotten himself into a radio station. The signal is weak, distant.

She reaches for the SCAN button, but doesn't press it.

Instead she reaches across and opens the passenger door.

She kisses into the air.

KIRBY

Come on, Pup!

The dog stops sniffing the garbage and wags its tail madly.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

In the car!

The dog leaps in, and slobbers on Kirby. She smiles.

She closes the door, hits the gas, and heads toward the future of humankind.

THE END.

"BREAKDOWN LANE"