



Draft 09-28-25

**CAST OF CHARACTERS - IN ORDER OF DIALOGUE APPEARANCE**

Donna - Age Open, Black Female.

Mike - Age Open, White Male.

Peter - Age Open, White Male.

Gavin - 40s and up, White Male.

Samantha - Age Open, White Female.

Luis - Age Open, Latino Male.

Isaiah - 30s and up, Black Male.

Nahim - Age Open, Male of Middle Eastern Descent.

Faith - 20ish, Race Open Woman.

Abby - 30s and up, Black Woman.

Claire - 50s and up, White Woman.

**SETTING**

A roadside diner, somewhere in the Nevada desert. Stage right is a counter with stools facing a prep area. The upstage end of the counter lifts up to allow employees to get to the prep area. A cash register is on one end with a phone next to it. An oscillating fan and a countertop radio are on the other.

The prep area behind the counter has a pie case, stainless steel serving counter, a "pass-through" to the unseen kitchen where orders come up, and a swinging door upstage right into the kitchen.

There are two tables, each with four chairs, downstage left and right.

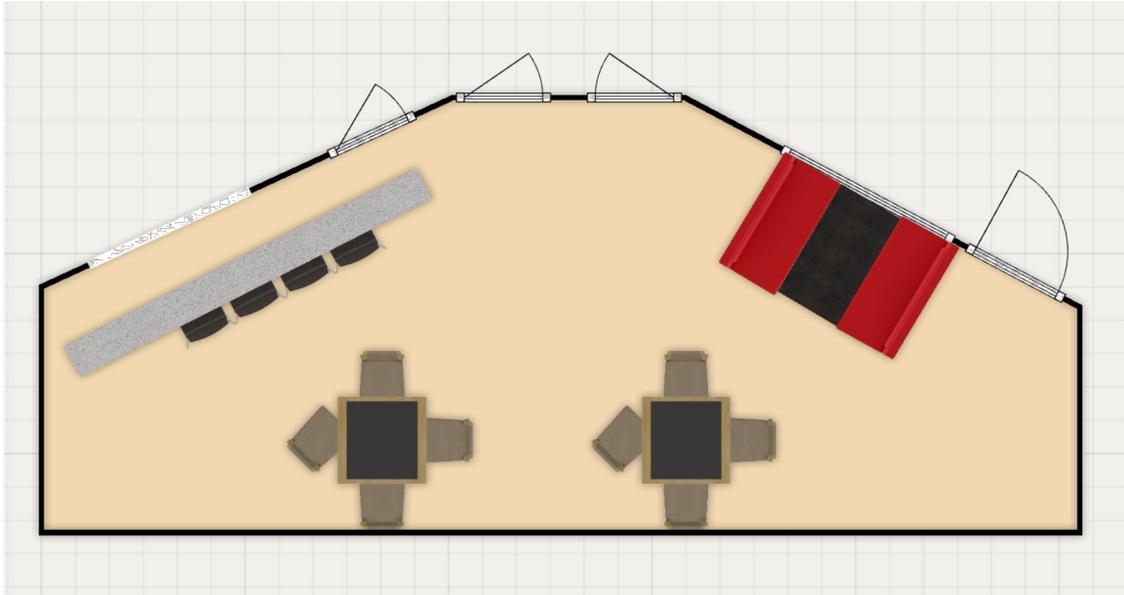
(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Along the short upstage wall are two doors leading to the men's and women's restrooms.

Stage left is the front of the diner with a booth next to the front door. There is a window above the booth. The window has been boarded over crudely. The same with the door - shuttered with planks nailed across it.

NOTE: the door needs to open even with the planks across it for an exit at the end of act two.



(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

**ACT ONE**

In the darkness we hear the fan buzzing quietly and the rustling of paper.

A focused spot comes up on the fan, which is oscillating back and forth slowly, rustling some paper place mats and an order pad. The rest of the stage lights come up slowly, dimly until we can see the full set.

The front door stands open and one of the chairs at a table is lying on its side. The receiver on the phone is off the hook, sitting on the counter.

There are no people in the diner - it is abandoned, desolate. Something bad happened here.

DONNA (V.O.)

This is how the world ends.

There is a pause... and then the radio blares to life, playing Patsy Cline's "I Fall to Pieces" loudly.

The lights and sound cut out sharply, returning us to full silence and blackness.

When the lights come up again, the front door is closed and crudely barricaded with boards, the chair has been returned to its feet, the phone's receiver is back on the hook, and the fan and radio are gone.

Donna, Mike, and Peter are all sitting at the table that is downstage right. Their action and dialogue throughout happen independently of what is happening in the rest of the diner. They don't interact with anyone else.

Claire is seated at the downstage left table with Faith. Isaiah and Nahim are at opposite ends of the window, peering out through cracks in the wood planking that covers it. Samantha is behind the counter. Abby is pacing in the center of the room. Abby and Faith are all trying to find a dial tone on their respective cell phones.

DONNA

(to Mike)

You know what you are? You're a...

Peter puts his hand up to block her face.

PETER

No!

MIKE

Oh, go ahead and say it.

(CONTINUED)

PETER

No! You guys, I can't take this anymore.

DONNA

I just think...

PETER

I know what you think. I have been listening to what you think and...

(to Mike)

...what you think for the last 1,700 miles! No more. I swear to God I will leave you here in the Nevada desert for the buzzards.

There is an uncomfortable pause.

MIKE

(mumbles)

Turkey vulture.

PETER

What?

MIKE

They're not really buzzards. They're turkey vultures.

There is another pause.

PETER

Asshole. She was going to call you an asshole.

DONNA

I was not.

MIKE

Yes, you were.

DONNA

No I wasn't. Asshole is nicer than what I was going to say.

MIKE

So much for an intelligent, reasonable debate.

DONNA

But see, that's the problem! You're not reasonable.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

Why? Because I have opinions that differ from yours?

DONNA

No, because your opinions are not based in anything even remotely resembling reason.

PETER

See? This? This right here? This is why people can't talk about politics.

MIKE

Why not?

PETER

Because those conversations never lead anywhere good. They just repeat themselves over and over and no one ever learns anything.

MIKE

I'm sorry, but I don't understand why we can't have a serious discussion, like adults, about world events and politics and religion and all of the other subjects that are "taboo" without it devolving into childish schoolyard name calling.

DONNA

I know you are but what am I?

PETER

It just doesn't work. Mike, you are... God love ya, but you're a right-wing, neo-conservative, moral majority, gun-toting, flag-waving, just this side of fascist, would be a redneck if you were from the south, Republican and Donna, you're a bleeding-heart liberal, feminist, whacko environmentalist, socialist, flag-burning, homo-loving, tax and spend Democrat. I believe the analogy I'm looking for has to do with oil and water.

DONNA

So what does that make you?

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

Vinegar?

PETER

No, no. I am Switzerland.  
Neutral. Centrist.

MIKE

So what can we talk about?

PETER

Celebrity gossip.

DONNA

Oh, please.

PETER

It's the only safe topic. No one  
has ever gotten hurt discussing  
famous people doing stupid things.

MIKE

So you'd rather just be completely  
uninvolved in what's happening in  
the world?

PETER

I'd rather just be completely  
uninvolved in this conversation.

Luis and Gavin enter from the kitchen and the lighting  
shifts, dimming on Donna, Peter, and Mike and coming up  
slightly on the rest of the diner.

GAVIN

You're sure there's no other way  
in?

SAMANTHA

The front and back door. That's  
it.

GAVIN

Any other windows?

SAMANTHA

(points to front window)  
Just there. And the small ones in  
the bathrooms.

Gavin looks at Luis.

LUIS

I got it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Luis goes into the men's room. Gavin crosses to Isaiah and Nahim.

GAVIN

Anything?

ISAIAH

No. I don't know. It's dark.

NAHIM

We thought we saw something on the other side of the highway, out in the brush in the desert, but...

ISAIAH

Like I said, it's dark.

Luis comes out of the men's room.

LUIS

It's too small for anyone to get through.

FAITH

Board it up anyway.

Luis pauses for a second, letting that sink in.

LUIS

I'm going to need more wood.

SAMANTHA

There are some shelves in the office. I'll show you.

Samantha leads Luis through the kitchen door.

ABBY

(looks at phone)  
I can't get signal.

FAITH

(on her own phone)  
Keep trying.

GAVIN

We've all tried. It's not...

FAITH

Keep trying!!

Faith looks at everyone defiantly for a second and then goes back to trying to get a signal on her cell phone.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY  
(to Claire)  
How are you feeling?

CLAIRE  
I'm all right, dear.

ABBY  
Do you want some more water?

CLAIRE  
Only if you can find some bourbon  
to go with it.

GAVIN  
Amen to that.  
(off Isaiah's look)  
Sorry, Father.

ISAIAH  
Reverend. But I think under the  
circumstances the Lord would  
forgive a nice stiff drink. Or  
six.

Luis and Samantha come back through the kitchen door with  
some wooden shelves. Luis carries a few of them into the  
bathroom and moments later we hear pounding, as if he is  
nailing them across the window.

GAVIN  
(to Samantha)  
You're absolutely sure there's no  
other way in?

SAMANTHA  
I'm sure.

GAVIN  
There's no basement entrance?

SAMANTHA  
There's no basement period.

Samantha picks up the receiver on the phone on the counter  
and tries for a dial tone. It's obvious there isn't one.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Oh, well. I'm not quite sure who  
I'd call anyway.

FAITH  
The police? The National Guard.  
The Marines?

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

Is there an emergency number for  
The Marines?

(picks up receiver)

Hello, Marine Corps? Yes, we're  
barricaded inside my diner out on  
Route 33 and I was wondering if you  
could send a few tanks over to help  
us out? Great. See ya soon.

She hangs up the phone.

NAHIM

Tanks would be good right about  
now. I wouldn't mind seeing a few  
tanks out there.

Luis comes out of the men's room and starts to head into the  
women's room to repeat the process.

GAVIN

Do you need any help?

LUIS

No.

Luis enters the women's room and moments later, the hammering  
noise is heard. Claire puts her hands to her ears.

CLAIRE

Oh, that noise.

ABBY

It'll be over in a minute.

They all sit there and listen to the pounding. After a  
minute, it stops and Luis comes out of the bathroom.

LUIS

Okay. That's as good as it's going  
to get.

GAVIN

All right. Good job.

ABBY

Right. Now what?

Everyone looks at each other expectantly. There is no answer  
so they all move to various parts of the diner silently as  
the focus shifts back to Donna, Mike, and Peter.

MIKE

All I'm saying...

(CONTINUED)

PETER

Oh God...

DONNA

See? He's unreasonable.

MIKE

All I'm saying is that we are living in a different world now.

DONNA

No, we're not...

MIKE

We can't...

DONNA

We're not...

MIKE

We can't put blinders on and say "it'll all work out fine." That's not reality anymore.

DONNA

But it isn't a different world!

MIKE

How can you say that?

DONNA

Because...

MIKE

How can you look at what happened on 9/11 and not...

DONNA

Oh god! 9/11, 9/11. It always comes back to 9/11 for you people.

MIKE

So we should, what? Just forget what happened?

DONNA

No! But horror shows like that have been going on around the globe for decades but people like you didn't notice because it didn't happen here. It didn't affect you. Then something happens in America and it's suddenly like we're the victims.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

We were the victims!

DONNA

But what about all of the other times when it wasn't us? Where was your moral indignation then? Where were your armies then?

PETER

Speaking of the army, I rented "Private Benjamin" the other night. Oh, that Goldie Hawn. What a card.

Mike and Donna look at Peter.

PETER (CONT'D)

I'm just saying.

The three of them return to their food in pensive silence as the lighting focus shifts to the rest of the diner.

FAITH

What time is it?

ABBY

(looks at her watch)  
A little after eight.

FAITH

How long do you think we can stay in here?

GAVIN

Until help arrives.

FAITH

Help from who? We don't know what the fuck is going on out there!

GAVIN

We know that people are dead out there and we're still alive.

FAITH

So far.

LUIS

I don't think we have a choice. Whoever or... whatever did that...

ISAIAH

"Whatever?"

(CONTINUED)

LUIS

Did you see anybody else out there?  
Did you see what happened to them?  
They were... Did you hear them  
screaming?

ISAIAH

We all did.

FAITH

I still do.

LUIS

I've seen a lot of things in my  
life, Reverend. A lot of people  
die horrible, ugly deaths sometimes  
at the hands of other people. But  
until you can explain to me how  
another human being could do... I'm  
sticking with whatever.

There is silence as they mull that one over.

GAVIN

Terrorists. It has to be  
terrorists.

ABBY

Oh please.

GAVIN

Poison gas or some sort of virus or  
something.

ABBY

If that were the case we'd all be  
dead by now. A couple of boards  
over the windows aren't going to  
stop poison gas.

SAMANTHA

Why would terrorists attack a diner  
out in the middle of nowhere?

GAVIN

Maybe they attacked everywhere.

ABBY

Okay, you know what? Now you're  
just scaring people.

GAVIN

I'm scaring people!? That's  
hysterical, lady.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (12)

GAVIN (CONT'D)

I don't think anything I could say could possibly make this situation any more scary.

ABBY

Well, you're not helping either.

GAVIN

Is it so completely impossible? Some sort of massive attack on America? For all we know the cities could be big smoldering heaps of rubble and what we're seeing is just the fallout.

FAITH

Shut up.

GAVIN

It certainly would explain a lot wouldn't it? Why we haven't seen anyone since this began. Have you seen a car? Even one car pass by since all of this started?

NAHIM

(pause)

No.

SAMANTHA

It's not a very busy road. Most of the traffic is on the interstate.

GAVIN

Not one car. It's been over two hours and not one single car.

ISAIAH

It seems to me that would disprove any theory of an attack.

GAVIN

How do you figure?

ISAIAH

If something that catastrophic had happened, wouldn't there be some sort of activity out there? People evacuating, running for their lives?

ABBY

Maybe everyone is holed up like us.

(CONTINUED)

FAITH

Oh, why doesn't someone just say it? They're all dead. The reason you're not seeing anyone out there is because everyone who is out there is dead.

ISAIAH

We don't know that.

FAITH

But we're all thinking it. And we're all wondering how long it's going to be before whatever is out there comes in here and kills us too.

Another pause.

CLAIRE

I actually wasn't kidding about that bourbon.

SAMANTHA

I'll see what I can find.

Samantha starts for the kitchen.

NAHIM

Wait. Do you have a TV or a radio?

SAMANTHA

There's a radio in the office.

NAHIM

Can someone take over here?

GAVIN

I will.

LUIS

What about supplies? Flashlights in case the power goes out?

SAMANTHA

There's some emergency stuff in the storage closet in back.

ABBY

Weapons, maybe?

SAMANTHA

Butcher knives. That's about it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (14)

ABBY  
Better than nothing.

LUIS  
Let's go see what we can find.

Nahim, Luis, Samantha, and Abby all go into the kitchen and Gavin goes to the window to take up watch.

The lights shift to focus on Donna, Mike, and Peter.

DONNA  
Fear. It's all about the fear.  
It's how the 1% control the 99%.

MIKE  
What?! How did we get from 9/11 to  
the destruction of the middle  
class?

DONNA  
It's all connected. The powers  
that be use the specter of some  
"big bad" to keep the rest of us  
docile so they can get richer while  
we get poorer.

MIKE  
So people who work hard can't be  
rewarded for that?

DONNA  
Let me guess. Silver spoon?

MIKE  
If I was rich I'd be flying first  
class to San Diego, not riding in  
the back of a crappy hatchback.

PETER  
Hey!

MIKE  
Sorry, dude, but you know it's  
true.

PETER  
I know. But still.

The lights shift to focus on the main diner as Faith gets up to go check the phone.

(CONTINUED)

ISAIAH

How far are we from the interstate?  
Does anyone know?

GAVIN

Twenty miles at least. Maybe  
thirty.

ISAIAH

What about the nearest town?

GAVIN

I'm not from around here.

CLAIRE

I passed through a little town just  
before I stopped here. Maybe ten  
minutes down the road. Not much  
more than a wide spot really.

Faith gives up on the phone.

FAITH

Yeah, me too. My ride was going to  
drop me off there but he said I'd  
have a better chance of finding  
someone to take me to the  
interstate here at the diner.

CLAIRE

You were hitchhiking?

FAITH

Yeah. Trying to get L.A.

CLAIRE

That's not very safe for a young  
girl.

FAITH

I can take care of myself.  
(beat)  
In most situations.

GAVIN

Why are asking about distances,  
Reverend?

Luis comes back into the dining area with a flashlight and a  
box of other supplies.

ISAIAH

If I could make it to the car...

(CONTINUED)

GAVIN

(nodding toward outside)  
They didn't make it to their car.  
(beat)  
Besides... What if you make it to  
that town or to the interstate  
and...

He trails off.

LUIS

He's right. If this is a localized  
event... If whatever is happening  
is just happening here then we're  
safer staying put until help comes  
to us.

ISAIAH

And if it's not localized?

LUIS

Then there's not going to be  
anyplace to drive to anyway.

Luis goes to the window as the lights shift up on Peter,  
Donna, and Mike.

DONNA

(to Mike)  
Fear is the basis of your side's  
entire argument. You're afraid.

MIKE

Damn right, Skippy. There's bad  
people out there that want to kill  
us.

DONNA

Us, who?

MIKE

Us! The good guys.

DONNA

There! That's a perfect example of  
what I was saying earlier. It's  
all so black and white with you.  
Good and evil, right and wrong,  
you're either for us or against us.

MIKE

Exactly! I mean, how can you look  
at it any other way?

(CONTINUED)

DONNA

But life is not black and white!  
There are grey areas.

MIKE

They flew planes into buildings  
full of innocent people. Bad guys.  
Good guys. Seems pretty black and  
white to me.

DONNA

But you have to understand why they  
wanted to do that.

MIKE

I hope to God I never understand  
why anyone would want to do that  
because at that point you become  
like them. Look, I understand what  
you're saying but the bottom line  
is it doesn't matter why they did  
it.

DONNA

Yes, it does!

MIKE

No! What matters is we have to  
protect ourselves to make sure that  
nothing like that ever happens  
again.

DONNA

I agree.

PETER

Wait, wait... He understands what  
you're saying and you agree. Can  
we stop there?

DONNA

No.

MIKE

No.

PETER

Great. Find something to make me  
feel guilty about and it'll be just  
like Thanksgiving with my family.

The lights shift to the main diner as Nahim and Samantha come  
back into the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (18)

He is carrying a small radio and Samantha has a box with a bottle of booze, some beer, and other drinks. He puts the radio on the counter.

NAHIM

Where can I plug it in?

Samantha points under the counter.

SAMANTHA

There's an outlet under there.  
I've got beer and some soft drinks.

Claire looks at Samantha expectantly.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Sorry... No bourbon. But I did  
find a bottle of tequila.

CLAIRE

Not my drink of choice but I think  
it'll get the job done.

Nahim plugs in the radio and turns it on. There is nothing but static. He runs the dial up and down.

NAHIM

Do you get stations out here?

SAMANTHA

Yeah, of course. Especially at  
night we get stuff all the way from  
California.

Samantha moves him out of the way and tries the radio. There is nothing but static. Isaiah and Gavin come away from the windows. Luis gives up searching through the box. Abby comes out of the kitchen with some knives. Claire and Faith get up from the table. They all move in around the radio.

GAVIN

Try AM.

SAMANTHA

I did.

ABBY

The antenna.

SAMANTHA

I did!

She moves the antenna around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (19)

FAITH

This can't be happening.

SAMANTHA

There's nothing.

FAITH

This can't be real.

Samantha is madly moving the antenna and twirling the dial. Isaiah reaches out to stop her by placing his hand on hers. She looks at him and then shuts off the radio.

Gavin turns and goes back to the window. Isaiah follows a moment later.

Claire picks up the bottle of tequila.

CLAIRE

Do you have a glass, dear?

LUIS

Make it two.

ABBY

Three. Reverend?

ISAIAH

No thank you. But I will have one of those beers.

GAVIN

Me too.

Faith takes three beers and delivers one to Isaiah and one Gavin. The third she keeps for herself. Samantha gets glasses from under the counter. Claire starts pouring shots of the tequila.

CLAIRE

So... back when I was a young girl, a teenager, my mother told me that drinking was a sin. Of course then my father took me aside and said so long as I didn't drink alone or drink with strangers that it wasn't really so bad.

She holds up her glass and turns to the room.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

My name is Claire.

Abby takes a glass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (20)

ABBY

Abby.

Luis takes a glass.

LUIS

I'm Luis.

Samantha takes a glass.

SAMANTHA

Sam's Diner. Short for Samantha.

Nahim takes a glass.

NAHIM

My name is Nahim.

CLAIRE

Say that again dear?

NAHIM

(slower)  
Nahim.

CLAIRE

Nahim. Does that have a meaning in your language?

NAHIM

My language is English, Ma'am. But in Arabic it means pleasant.

CLAIRE

Pleasant. I like it.

She turns to the others by the windows.

ISAIAH

Isaiah is my given name.

CLAIRE

The prophet.

ISAIAH

No. Just a reverend.

CLAIRE

Can't hurt to have a man of God on our side.

(to Gavin)  
And you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (21)

GAVIN

Gavin. Nice to... Well...

CLAIRE

Yes. And our hitchhiker...

FAITH

Don't read anything in to this...  
But my name is Faith.

Claire smiles a little and hoists her glass.

CLAIRE

I'll drink to that.

They all raise their glasses or bottles and drink.

At the same time, Donna, Peter, and Mike drink from their respective glasses.

The lights shift to Donna, Peter, and Mike and during the following exchange the rest of the group moves silently at various times around the diner. Luis and Abby take over on window detail, Nahim, Samantha, and Claire are all move to the stage left table. Faith goes to one of the booths. Isaiah and Gavin move to the counter.

DONNA

(to Mike)

So let me ask you a question.

PETER

Guys, come on...

MIKE

Okay. Ask away.

PETER

No, no more. I can't take it.  
Just because we're traveling  
together doesn't mean we have to  
agree with each other or even like  
each other. We just have to not  
kill each other.

MIKE

We're not going to kill each other.

PETER

Need I remind you about the  
buzzards?

MIKE

Actually, they're turkey...

(CONTINUED)

PETER

Oh my God!

DONNA

Why are you so afraid of confrontation?

PETER

Because I'm Episcopalian. We don't do conflict.

DONNA

You just sit in silence and let your anger and frustration build to the point of exploding?

PETER

Exactly. It's one of the basic tenants of Christianity. I'm pretty sure it's in the bible somewhere.

MIKE

You didn't strike me as the religious type.

PETER

And why is that?

MIKE

Because I thought you were...

DONNA

He thinks you're gay.

PETER

Yeah? So? Gay people can't believe in God?

MIKE

Oh, this he wants to argue about.

PETER

First, I only said we shouldn't argue about politics, I never said anything about religion. And second, I don't want to argue.

MIKE

Well, then what do you want to do?

PETER

I want to eat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (23)

Peter digs into his burger as the lights shift to the main part of the diner. Gavin stands up to stretch.

GAVIN

It's going to be a long night.

FAITH

It feels like we've been in here forever.

ABBY

It's amazing.

SAMANTHA

What?

ABBY

How much things can change in a few hours. I mean a few hours ago I was sitting at that counter eating a cheeseburger, worrying about how fattening it was... How much extra time I was going to have to spend on the treadmill this week to get ready for a big date on Saturday. My first real date in years.

SAMANTHA

Newly single?

ABBY

Freshly divorced. As of about eight hours ago. Talk about things changing quickly, huh?

GAVIN

You just got divorced today and you were going out on a date this weekend?

ABBY

We've been separated for years. Elliot... That's my husband... Ex-husband... He moved to Salt Lake City but we just never finalized it for whatever reason. I had the papers all ready and everything but we never signed them. But then last week this nice man asked me out on a date and I decided, well... Maybe before I go out with a new guy I should finish things with the old one.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (24)

ABBY (CONT'D)

So I drove out there, we signed the papers, and I was on my way back home.

(beat)

Sorry, you guys don't want to hear this.

SAMANTHA

Better than us sitting here in silence. Is the new guy cute?

ABBY

(smiles)

Yeah. Very.

ISAIAH

But what were you doing way out here? This isn't exactly on the way from Salt Lake City.

SAMANTHA

This isn't on the way from anywhere.

ABBY

I don't know, to be honest. I was driving on the interstate and it was so noisy with cars and trucks and... The desert looked quiet. So I decided to take the scenic route. I don't think I'll be doing that again.

ISAIAH

The road less traveled.

ABBY

Yeah. The sun was going down and I saw the diner. And here I am.

(beat)

Well... I shared my story. Who's next?

Everybody just sort of looks at each other, but no one speaks up. The lights shift to Donna, Peter, and Mike.

DONNA

It's funny.

MIKE

What is?

(CONTINUED)

DONNA

The three of us. Sitting here in this craphole of a diner.

PETER

Shhhh. We haven't ordered dessert yet. You want them to spit in your pie?

DONNA

I just think it's funny.

MIKE

What's funny about it? Pete took out an ad...

PETER

Peter.

MIKE

What?

PETER

For, like, the billionth time, I prefer Peter. Not Pete. Pete is what you call a Labrador.

MIKE

Sorry. Peter took out an ad for people to share expenses on a trip from Chicago to San Diego. We answered the ad. Here we are. What's so funny?

DONNA

It's just, we're such different people.

MIKE

You usually only hang out with people who are like you?

DONNA

Doesn't everybody?

MIKE

Pretty narrow way of living.

DONNA

Oh, so I suppose you are this all-inclusive kind of guy.

PETER

Some of his best friends are gay.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE  
You don't know.

PETER  
Trust me. I know.

The lights shift to the main diner as Abby moves to put her bottle down on the counter.

ABBY  
What about you, Claire. How'd you end up here?

CLAIRE  
Well, mine isn't as interesting as yours. No hot dates this weekend I'm afraid. I was visiting my grandson and his new wife. He's in the military... Lives on a base a not too far from here.

NAHIM  
There's a military base nearby?

SAMANTHA  
About twenty miles. Most of the customers I get are on their way to or from there. Not much else on this road.

ISAIAH  
It is kind of a remote place for a diner.

SAMANTHA  
I like remote. Well, until tonight.

ISAIAH  
Understandable. But it must be difficult, running a business like this out here.

SAMANTHA  
I get by. It's a simple life. Again... Until tonight.

NAHIM  
What else do you know about these military bases?

SAMANTHA  
Not much. Why?

NAHIM

Well, what if what's going on here has something to do with them? Maybe they were doing some sort of secret testing or something and it got out of control.

GAVIN

We don't do stuff like that.

NAHIM

"We?"

GAVIN

We, Americans. It's only the crazy middle-eastern countries that fool around with that kind of stuff.

NAHIM

I'm an American. I was born in San Francisco.

GAVIN

Then I was including you in the "we."

NAHIM

Thank you. I appreciate that. But are you saying that the US military has absolutely no chemical or biological weapons program?

GAVIN

I'm sure we probably do, but if so it's only to figure out how to stop other people from using it on us.

FAITH

What an idiot.

GAVIN

Excuse me?

FAITH

I said... What. An. Idiot.

GAVIN

I heard you the first time.

FAITH

Then why did you make me repeat it?

ISAIAH

Please, let's not...

(CONTINUED)

GAVIN

No, if she has something to say, I want to hear it. We're just talking, right? Passing time...

There is a bit of silence.

FAITH

Never mind.

GAVIN

No, come on. You're what... Twenty-something? Enlighten us with your years of experience and wisdom.

FAITH

Are you suggesting that because I'm young I can't possibly have anything intelligent to say?

GAVIN

You mean other than calling me an idiot.

ISAIAH

That's enough! Wouldn't you all agree that we have enough problems without turning on one another?

There is an uncomfortable silence as the lighting shifts back to Peter, Donna, and Mike.

MIKE

You know, I should probably be offended.

PETER

By?

MIKE

The automatic assumption that just because I have conservative beliefs that I'm somehow a right-wing bigot who wouldn't have any gay friends.

DONNA

Do you?

MIKE

That's not the point.

DONNA

It absolutely is the point.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

What I'm saying is... Okay, earlier you were saying that conservatives have this black and white viewpoint of the world but what you liberals do is just as bad.

DONNA

What?

MIKE

You pigeonhole people. You want them to be in these little boxes. Like, because I have different beliefs than you about some things...

DONNA

Everything.

MIKE

That's what I'm saying! You think we couldn't possibly ever agree on anything. You will automatically dismiss anything I say, no matter how right I may be, just because I'm saying it.

DONNA

Like you're lending a lot of credence to the things we say?

PETER

Whoa. We? No, no. I'm Switzerland, remember?

DONNA

Sorry, pal. It's time to pick a side.

PETER

No. Switzerland does not pick sides. Switzerland... Goes to the bathroom. That's what Switzerland does.

(stands)

If the waitress comes tell her I want pie.

Peter goes to the bathroom as the lighting shifts back to the main diner.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY

So what's your story, Reverend?  
How'd you wind up here in  
purgatory?

ISAIAH

Divine intervention, I suppose.

ABBY

How so?

ISAIAH

I got lost.  
(laughs a little)  
My car has seen better days and I  
pulled off the highway looking for  
a service station. A few dozen  
wrong turns later and I found this  
place.

NAHIM

How is that divine intervention?

ISAIAH

I don't know yet. But I'm sure  
there's a reason that I'm here.

LUIS

You really believe that? That this  
is all a part of God's plan?

ISAIAH

Yes, I do.

CLAIRE

So do I, Reverend.

LUIS

And what if you don't believe in  
God?

CLAIRE

Just because you don't believe in  
something doesn't mean it isn't  
real.

LUIS

Well, if that's true... This is one  
seriously fucked up plan.

FAITH

Amen brother.

(CONTINUED)

LUIS  
Pardon my language.

ISAIAH  
No worries. So what was your plan?

LUIS  
What do you mean?

ISAIAH  
If it wasn't God that brought you here then what did?

LUIS  
(beat)  
I heard they had good hamburgers.

SAMANTHA  
Best damn hamburgers in the state.

ABBY  
Screw the treadmill!

There are smiles all around and a noticeable drop in the tension.

NAHIM  
Speaking of food...

SAMANTHA  
Are you hungry? Kitchen's open.

NAHIM  
No, not right now. But out of curiosity, how much food have you got back there?

SAMANTHA  
What do you mean?

GAVIN  
He means if we have to stay here for awhile. How long before we run out of food?

NAHIM  
(beat)  
Yes.

SAMANTHA  
Well, I don't know. If the power stays on I'd say there's plenty in there for all of us for a week. Maybe two if we eat light.

(CONTINUED)

FAITH

And if the power goes out?

SAMANTHA

(beat)

A couple of days.

GAVIN

Do you have a backup generator?

SAMANTHA

Yes, but it has to be turned on manually.

GAVIN

So?

SAMANTHA

So, it's in a shed about fifty yards out back. Who's going to volunteer to go start it up?

CLAIRE

What say we burn that bridge when we get to it?

ISAIAH

Good idea.

The focus shifts back to the table with Donna and Mike.

MIKE

So do you have a boyfriend?

(Donna rolls her eyes)

Girlfriend?

DONNA

Oh my God, you are so predictable.

MIKE

I'm not hitting on you.

DONNA

Please.

MIKE

I'm not! I'm just trying to find a topic that won't end with you throwing plates at my head.

DONNA

I'm not sure such a topic exists.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

Are you always this combative?

DONNA

Only when provoked.

MIKE

How is asking if you have a  
boyfriend provoking?

DONNA

Because it's laden with hidden  
meanings and ulterior motives.

MIKE

There are no ulterior motives!  
You're not my type.

DONNA

What the hell is that supposed to  
mean?

MIKE

Speaking of predictable.

DONNA

What?

MIKE

Predictable feminist reaction.  
Offended if a man expresses  
interest and offended if they  
don't. We can't win.

DONNA

Predictable male thinking. It's  
always about winning. Conquering  
the weak female.

MIKE

So absolutely not my type.

DONNA

Well, then, we do have something in  
common.

Peter returns to the table.

PETER

So what did I miss?

DONNA

We were just talking about women's  
roles in a patriarchal society.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (34)

PETER

(beat)

I'm going back to the bathroom.

And he does. The lighting shifts back to the main diner.

CLAIRE

So, we were telling stories. Who hasn't gone? Nahim? How did you come to be part of our merry band of misfits?

NAHIM

I guess it's kind of my wife's fault.

FAITH

Ooo, this sounds juicy.

NAHIM

I'm just kidding, I don't blame her.

GAVIN

Oh come on! What good are wives if you can't blame them for things?

FAITH

Nice.

NAHIM

My wife was born in the Middle East. I've actually never been. Like I said, I was born in San Francisco. Anyway, when she first came here about ten years ago, her family used to come out here to the desert because it reminded them of home. She keeps telling me how beautiful the country is. So I was on my way to a job interview in Las Vegas at one of the casinos and my wife insisted that I drive through the desert to... I don't know... Make some sort of spiritual connection to my ancestry I suppose.

(beat)

I kind of doubt this is what she had in mind.

ISAIAH

Why haven't you ever visited?

(CONTINUED)

NAHIM

My parents fled the country just before I was born. The rest of their family - my uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents - they were all killed.

CLAIRE

Dear God, why?

NAHIM

Many of the countries in that region are not run by very nice people, Ma'am.

ABBY

And even now? That was when you were a child...

NAHIM

It's still not safe.

GAVIN

Well, give it time.

NAHIM

What do you mean?

GAVIN

I'm sure eventually we'll go in and clean things up like we did in Iraq and Afghanistan.

FAITH

Don't make me call you an idiot again.

GAVIN

What? You just heard the man. These countries are run by bad people. We've gotten rid of a few of them and maybe his country will be next on the list.

NAHIM

First of all, I doubt that there will be any regime changes happening there anytime soon.

GAVIN

Why not?

(CONTINUED)

NAHIM

Because they don't have a lot of oil. And second, for the last time... my country is the United States.

As Peter comes back to the table from the bathroom, the focus shifts to Donna, Peter, and Mike. Peter sits.

PETER

Puppies.

MIKE

What?

PETER

Puppies. I have decided puppies are the only safe thing for us to talk about.

MIKE

I like puppies.

DONNA

I'm more of a cat person myself.

MIKE

See! Combative.

DONNA

How is liking cats combative?!

MIKE

Because you just said that so you could disagree with me.

DONNA

I did not! I like cats.

MIKE

Nobody likes cats.

PETER

Air. Can we all agree that air is a good thing?

DONNA

Sure. When it's not polluted by rich corporations raping the earth of it's natural resources.

There is a pause as Mike and Peter look at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (37)

DONNA (CONT'D)

Okay, maybe that was a little combative.

The focus shifts back to the other characters in the diner.

ABBY

So, what should we talk about next? Abortion? Gay marriage?

LUIS

How about we just not talk?

FAITH

Because at least when I'm calling him an idiot I'm not thinking about what's going on out there.

ISAIAH

Speaking of which, what is going on out there?

Abby looks out the window again.

ABBY

Nothing. You'd think that would be an encouraging sign.

CLAIRE

Maybe we should check the radio again?

Gavin leans over the counter and turns on the radio. Nothing but static.

SAMANTHA

What's that old saying? Something about doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

NAHIM

That would be the definition of insanity... At least according to Einstein.

Gavin shuts off the radio.

GAVIN

He may have had a point.

SAMANTHA

I just don't understand how there can be nothing on the radio.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (38)

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I mean what could've happened that could've knocked out every radio station within a five-hundred mile range?

GAVIN

There's only one thing I can think of.

FAITH

I'm afraid to ask.

GAVIN

Nuclear bombs. It's the only thing big enough that would disrupt communications on that scale.

NAHIM

But that doesn't explain what happened to those people outside. I mean, I'm no expert but radioactive fallout doesn't kill people like that, does it?

GAVIN

No. It doesn't.

ABBY

So, what does?

GAVIN

I don't know. I'm still stuck on some sort of chemical or nerve agent.

ABBY

And I'm still stuck on, if it was we'd be dead too. There's air coming in from the outside.

GAVIN

Maybe it's something that disperses quickly. Something that can be administered in close quarters.

ISAIAH

Then that would mean that there would have been people doing the administering. Did anyone see anybody else out there?

LUIS

There was no one else out there. Just those three.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY

Did anybody... did anyone know them? Talk to them?

SAMANTHA

I took their orders. Gave them their food. But it was so busy I didn't really have time to talk. They seemed nice. They were sitting over there.

Samantha points at the table where Donna, Mike, and Peter are sitting. The focus lights shift back to their table and during the following conversation the rest of the group moves to new positions as follows: Faith is at the upstage window and Luis is at the downstage window. Gavin and Samantha are at the table, sitting quietly while Claire sits with her head down at the other table. Abby, Nahim and Isaiah are at the counter.

DONNA

So Peter, you said you were going to San Diego for your parents' wedding anniversary?

PETER

Yep. Their 30th. I'm driving back to surprise them.

DONNA

That's sweet.

PETER

I'm a sweet guy. But poor, hence the whole "share expenses" thing. You said you were meeting someone there?

DONNA

My boyfriend.

Donna looks at Mike with a warning.

MIKE

I didn't say a word.

PETER

Long distance relationship?

DONNA

Very long distance. About 7,000 miles.

(CONTINUED)

PETER

I was never big in geography but I'm pretty sure Chicago to San Diego is only a couple thousand miles.

DONNA

Chicago to the Middle East. He's in the navy.

MIKE

Still not saying a word.

DONNA

He's not any happier about the way things are going than I am.

MIKE

Sorry to hear that.

DONNA

And what is that supposed to mean?

MIKE

It means I'm sorry to hear that a member of our armed services is not happy. They're doing great work and should be proud of themselves.

DONNA

They should be proud of invading countries and killing innocent people?

MIKE

War is hell.

Donna glares as the light fades on them.

Abby crosses to Luis with a bottle of water and a warm but low spot comes up on them.

ABBY

Do you need a break?

LUIS

No.

She offers him the bottle of water.

LUIS (CONT'D)

Thanks.

He takes it and drinks.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY  
Still quiet?

LUIS  
As a tomb.

ABBY  
Nice metaphor.

LUIS  
Sorry.

Abby looks at her watch.

ABBY  
1:30. Another five hours until  
sunrise maybe?

LUIS  
Maybe a little less.

ABBY  
I'm looking forward to it.

LUIS  
Why? It's not going to change  
anything.

ABBY  
I don't know. At least if there's  
something... It'll be easier to see  
in the daylight.

LUIS  
What if we find out we don't want  
to see what's out there?

ABBY  
Well... Better the devil you know,  
right?

LUIS  
I guess.

ABBY  
So, Luis... Tell me your life  
story.

LUIS  
Why?

ABBY  
There's nothing good on TV.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (42)

Luis smiles a bit despite himself.

LUIS  
Well... I'd have to say on the whole it's been a pretty lousy week.

ABBY  
How so?

Luis makes a motion around the diner.

ABBY (CONT'D)  
Besides this.

LUIS  
(beat)  
I lost my job.

ABBY  
I'm sorry.

LUIS  
Me too. It's been... So this morning I thought I'd go take a drive... To clear my head...

ABBY  
How'd that work out for you?

LUIS  
Not so great.

ABBY  
Yeah.

Abby looks back at the room for a moment.

ABBY (CONT'D)  
Quiet in here, too.

LUIS  
Small favors.

ABBY  
I have to admit...

LUIS  
What?

ABBY  
I'm a little worried about Gavin.

(CONTINUED)

LUIS

How so?

ABBY

He scares me.

LUIS

Everything that's going on and you choose that guy to be afraid of?

ABBY

You don't understand. I know guys like him. He puts on a decent front most of the time but underneath he's got a lot of anger issues.

LUIS

Not so far underneath.

ABBY

True. It's just that whole right and wrong, good versus evil, black and white thing. People who think like that scare me.

LUIS

Well, I think he's a lot more hot air than anything.

ABBY

Under normal circumstances, probably. But under pressure like this? I mean you heard some of things he was saying to Nahim.

LUIS

We're all on the same side here.

ABBY

Sure. For now.

Luis considers this for a moment and then turns back to the window.

The lights fade on the main diner and come up on Peter, Donna, and Mike.

PETER

Are we going to stop in Vegas?

DONNA

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (44)

PETER

What do you mean why? It's Vegas,  
baby!

DONNA

I'd rather just drive all the way  
through to San Diego.

MIKE

Me too. If we haul ass we can  
probably make it by 2am.

PETER

That's when the bars close. What  
kind of fun is that?

DONNA

Mike doesn't believe in fun.

MIKE

She's right. Us Republicans are  
adamantly against fun. Grow up.

The spot fades on them and another warm but low spot comes up  
on Nahim and Isaiah at the counter.

ISAIAH

Do you mind if I ask you a  
question?

NAHIM

Depends on what it is I suppose.

ISAIAH

You were just a kid when 9/11  
happened. What was it like for you  
after that? Here.

NAHIM

Mostly okay.

ISAIAH

Mostly?

NAHIM

People were looking for someone to  
blame. A bad guy. People who look  
like me fit the profile. Kids  
were... not always kind. A lot of  
adults, too.

ISAIAH

You know that not everybody thought  
that way.

(CONTINUED)

NAHIM

I know. That's why it was mostly okay. And since then there have been lots of other "bad guys" for people to focus on. But even when it's mostly okay it's... Too many people live their lives afraid. Fear makes people do crazy things.

ISAIAH

That doesn't excuse it.

NAHIM

No.

ISAIAH

How do you get through it?

NAHIM

My family. Prayer.

ISAIAH

Are you Muslim?

NAHIM

Yes. You're not going to try to convert me are you?

ISAIAH

(laughs a little)

No, no. I'm a big believer in leaving people to their beliefs. As long as they have them I'm okay with it.

NAHIM

The stained glass window.

ISAIAH

I'm sorry?

NAHIM

I read in a book somewhere... I don't remember which one but it wasn't a religious book. Some sort of a detective novel or something. But it had one of the most beautiful descriptions of God that I've ever read. It said that Allah or God was like a light. And in between the light and us is this enormous stained glass window, too big for any one person to see all of it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (46)

NAHIM (CONT'D)

The light of God shines through the window and some of us see the blues and others the reds. Some yellow, some green. But regardless of what color we are seeing, the light comes from the same source.

ISAIAH

That's beautiful. I may have to steal that for a sermon.

NAHIM

(shrugs)

I stole it so you can too.

ISAIAH

Well, it is more eloquent than my "as long as you believe in something" statement.

NAHIM

That's true.

ISAIAH

It's people like Luis that worry me.

NAHIM

Because he doesn't believe?

ISAIAH

Yes. It makes me sad. I know that sounds a bit silly but it does... To not have anything to believe in.

NAHIM

Perhaps he believes in himself.

ISAIAH

We all need something larger than ourselves, don't you think?

NAHIM

I suppose. But perhaps he believes and he just doesn't know it.

ISAIAH

But that's the problem. It's times like this when you need God the most. You need to have a place to put your faith. And right now many people in this room are putting their faith in Luis.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (47)

ISAIAH (CONT'D)

I, on the other hand, have a hard time believing in someone who only believes in himself.

NAHIM

Well, so far I agree with his decisions.

ISAIAH

And when you don't? Listen, he and Gavin seem to have taken some sort of leadership position but it's only because they have the strongest personalities. He's not in charge here, no matter what he may think. But what does everyone else think? And when it comes down to making a decision about what we're going to do here, who are they going to listen to?

Nahim considers this and the spot fades on them and comes up on Peter, Donna, and Mike.

PETER

(looks at menu)

So, who else is in on the pie?

DONNA

I've got chocolate chip cookies in the car.

PETER

I don't like chocolate.

Donna and Mike both drop their respective forks and gape at him.

PETER (CONT'D)

What?

DONNA

Who doesn't like chocolate?

MIKE

Yeah man, that's just freaky.

DONNA

Circus freaky.

MIKE

(to Donna)

I never did trust him.

(CONTINUED)

DONNA  
Shifty. You can see it in the  
eyes.

PETER  
Are you two finished?

MIKE  
I don't know if I can go another  
350 miles with someone who doesn't  
like chocolate.

DONNA  
We could leave him here.

MIKE  
It's his car.

DONNA  
People who don't like chocolate  
shouldn't be allowed to have cars.

MIKE  
Good point.

PETER  
Global warming.

MIKE  
What?

PETER  
I've decided I like it better when  
you two are fighting. Global  
warming. Fact or fiction. Go.

MIKE  
Oh, don't get me started on that...

DONNA  
Oh, here we go...

The two of them descend into bickering as Peter sits back and  
smiles.

The spot fades on them and up on Gavin and Samantha seated at  
the front table.

GAVIN  
I'm going crazy just sitting here.  
I need something to occupy my  
brain.

SAMANTHA

I used to have a deck of cards in my office.

GAVIN

And?

SAMANTHA

Got tired of playing solitaire.

GAVIN

You run this place all by yourself?

SAMANTHA

There's a girl that comes in on weekends. It's a little busier then. But usually, it's just me.

GAVIN

What happens if you want to take a vacation?

SAMANTHA

I hang a "gone fishin'" sign on the door. It's not like anybody's life depends on this diner.

(beat)

Well...

GAVIN

You don't mind it?

SAMANTHA

Mind what?

GAVIN

Being out here, alone?

SAMANTHA

Like I said earlier. Remote is usually a good thing.

GAVIN

Sounds like you're hiding.

SAMANTHA

Hiding? No. My ex-husband...

(catches herself)

Let's just say I've learned that if you make it hard for people to get to you, they have a tendency to stay away.

(CONTINUED)

GAVIN

It'd make me crazy. It is making me crazy.

SAMANTHA

You get used to it.

GAVIN

Being alone or going crazy?

SAMANTHA

Both, I guess.

(beat)

So what about you? You're a hustle and bustle type?

GAVIN

Something like that.

SAMANTHA

What do you do for a living?

GAVIN

Sales. Aerospace and defense.

SAMANTHA

That's interesting.

GAVIN

Not really. Like today I had to do a dog and pony show for the military brass up at the base to buy the latest, greatest.

SAMANTHA

You were on your way back from the base like Claire?

GAVIN

Yes. They offered to feed us there but I've had their food before. Yours is better.

SAMANTHA

Thanks.

GAVIN

That's not really saying much.

SAMANTHA

I take what I can get.

(beat)

So you know military stuff.

(CONTINUED)

GAVIN

Some.

SAMANTHA

Do you think what's going on has anything to do with that?

GAVIN

I think if it didn't before it does by now.

SAMANTHA

War?

GAVIN

Or something like it.

SAMANTHA

I can't even wrap my brain around what that looks like.

GAVIN

What?

SAMANTHA

War. Here. It's always been over there, somewhere. Some far off distant place that we watch on TV. You watch things blowing up and you see people dying and then you look out your window and you see sunny skies and trees. It's not "here."

GAVIN

September eleventh was pretty "here." We saw what they did.

Gavin glances over toward the counter during this.

SAMANTHA

Why are you looking at him?

GAVIN

What?

SAMANTHA

You looked at Nahim when you said that. What "they" did.

GAVIN

No I didn't.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

Yes, you did. Have you not been listening to him? He's an American citizen. Born here just like you and me.

GAVIN

How do you know that?

SAMANTHA

Because he said so.

GAVIN

So we're just going to take his word for it?

SAMANTHA

Well, I doubt that he's carrying his birth certificate with him so...

GAVIN

Look, I just think it's weird is all.

SAMANTHA

Weird how?

GAVIN

When was the last time you saw an Arab in here?

Samantha doesn't answer.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Yeah. So isn't it just a strange coincidence that he happens to be here when the world goes kaboom?

SAMANTHA

Maybe it is just a coincidence. Sort of like a guy who works with the military wandering through just as the world goes kaboom.

GAVIN

Yes, but you get military people in here all the time. You said so yourself.

SAMANTHA

Doesn't mean you didn't have something to do with it. Or maybe it was Abby or the reverend.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (53)

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I don't get too many black people in here. Hell, I don't get too many people at all and in one night I've got seven of you sitting here when all hell breaks loose?

GAVIN

Exactly. There's something weird going on here.

SAMANTHA

Yeah, there's three dead people in my parking lot.

GAVIN

Not out there. In here.

SAMANTHA

You're right... You are going crazy.

Samantha gets up and goes to the women's room. The spot comes back up on Donna, Mike, and Peter.

MIKE

So, we should shut down all industry and get rid of all the cars go back to living on the land?

DONNA

Oh, my God, stop twisting what I'm saying.

MIKE

It gets hot. It gets cold. It's called weather.

DONNA

(to Peter)

See what you started?

PETER

I changed my mind. Go back to making fun of me.

MIKE

No, this is important and I really want to understand what she's saying.

(CONTINUED)

DONNA

Why? Why is understanding this more important than anything else I've been saying that you've been ignoring?

MIKE

Because it perfectly encapsulates your viewpoint on all the issues. You're willing to give up your freedoms... your rights... in order to solve problems that don't exist.

DONNA

They do exist! And they are much more important than the things you're afraid of.

MIKE

And now we're back to I'm afraid.

DONNA

If the scaredy cat suit fits...

MIKE

Why is being concerned about the future of the country and my family and my own life... how is that being afraid? And how is that a bad thing?

DONNA

Because you can't control everything. Bad stuff is going to happen. The key is figuring out which bad stuff is actually worth worrying about.

MIKE

And you think only liberals can do that?

DONNA

Pretty much.

MIKE

You're ridiculous.

DONNA

(shakes her head)  
Are we ready to get out of here?

PETER

I didn't get pie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (55)

MIKE

Oh. Pie does sound good.

DONNA

The sooner we get on the road, the less time we have to spend together.

MIKE

That sounds better than pie.

DONNA

I'll get the check.

Donna, Peter, and Mike stand. Donna goes to the register where Samantha is standing but they don't interact, specifically.

Donna, Peter, and Mike exit via the front door stage left as the lights come up on the main diner.

Claire sits up, stretches a bit, and then walks over to Faith at the window. A warm spot comes up on them.

CLAIRE

I can't believe I fell asleep.

FAITH

I can't either. I don't think I'll ever fall asleep again.

CLAIRE

Did I miss anything?

FAITH

You mean the part where the guys in white hats came to rescue us but we said "no thanks, we're enjoying the abject terror thing."

CLAIRE

I'll take that as a no.

FAITH

Sorry. I tend to get a little mouthy when I'm scared shitless.

CLAIRE

I don't know. You strike me as the type of girl who's a little mouthy all the time.

(CONTINUED)

FAITH

I'm going to take that as a compliment.

CLAIRE

It was meant as one, darling. You kind of remind me of someone.

FAITH

Let me guess. You?

CLAIRE

Oh Lord, no. My father would've beat me senseless with his belt if I'd acted like you. No, I'm talking about my daughter, about twenty years ago when she was around your age.

FAITH

Hell-raiser?

CLAIRE

That's putting it kindly. She was always a headstrong child but when she got to be a teenager she got mixed up in all sorts of stuff she shouldn't of. I tried to stop her but you know how kids are.

FAITH

We never listen to reason.

CLAIRE

Well, no you don't. But you know for all of the bad stuff there was some good stuff. And I got a grandson out of it who is just the best thing in the world.

FAITH

Military man?

CLAIRE

Yes, ma'am. You want to see a picture?

FAITH

Sure.

Claire fishes in her sweater pocket for her wallet, pulls it out, and flips it open to a picture.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE  
That's Stephen.

FAITH  
Hottie.

CLAIRE  
Now, don't be getting any ideas.  
He got married a few months ago so  
he's off the market.

FAITH  
I'll be a good girl. So your  
daughter must be proud.

CLAIRE  
Oh, I don't know. Haven't heard  
from her in ten years. I imagine  
she's probably dead by now.

Claire puts away the wallet.

FAITH  
Wow, that's kind of cold.

CLAIRE  
I guess, maybe. Do you talk to  
your mom often?

FAITH  
(beat)  
No. She's sort of a mess.

CLAIRE  
Well... Then you understand.

Faith nods a little.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
So, you want to hear my theory on  
what's going on outside? It's a  
doozy.

FAITH  
Sure.

CLAIRE  
Aliens.

FAITH  
You mean like E.T.?

CLAIRE

Oh no, not all cute and huggable like him. More like the aliens in those "Alien" movies. You know we're not too far from Area 51 and they even call one of the roads around here the "E.T. Highway."

FAITH

So you're thinking it's an alien invasion?

CLAIRE

Why not? Makes a lot more sense than the nuclear bomb theory from that idiot over there.

Faith laughs as Samantha comes out of the ladies' room. The warm spot fades on Claire and Faith and the entire room gets a little brighter.

SAMANTHA

What's so funny?

CLAIRE

Oh, we're just floating some ideas around.

FAITH

Yeah, she thinks we're being attacked by aliens.

CLAIRE

(smiling)

I don't hear you coming up with a better idea.

FAITH

Well, as a matter of fact, I do have a theory.

GAVIN

Oh, I can't wait to hear this.

FAITH

It's a reality show.

ISAIAH

A what?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (59)

FAITH

Come on, think about it. Pick eight strangers and make them think their lives are in danger and see what happens. I bet there are cameras all over the place.

NAHIM

Scary thing is it would probably be a big hit.

FAITH

Hey, we make it through this and we could all be big stars!

She stands and begins parading around the room like a Hollywood starlet.

FAITH (CONT'D)

We'll go on talk shows and do interviews for our adoring fans. "Oh no, I knew the whole thing was fake the entire time. I just played along so as not to ruin it for the viewing public."

Abby runs up and pretends to hand her a pen and paper.

ABBY

Faith, Faith! Can I have your autograph!

FAITH

Oh of course!

Samantha comes up and pretends to interview her Faith

SAMANTHA

Faith, Celebrity News Network here. Tell us what did you think of the rest of your cast mates?

FAITH

Oh they were all dears. Just dears. Even Gavin.

GAVIN

Hey, leave me out of this.

FAITH

Yes, we get together often, the eight of us and we just laugh and laugh about the whole thing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (60)

FAITH (CONT'D)

We're all just the bestest of  
friends now.

From off there is the faint sound of Donna crying for help.  
It should be so soft as to barely register the first time.

DONNA (O.S.)

Help...

FAITH

Why, just last week they came to my  
villa in Tuscany and we sat by the  
pool sipping Mai Tais while  
servants fanned us with palm  
fronds.

DONNA (O.S.)

(a little louder)

Help... Me...

CLAIRE

Make mine a bourbon instead of a  
Mai Tai and I'm there.

FAITH

Everyone except for Claire of  
course who only drinks the finest  
bourbon.

DONNA (O.S.)

(louder still)

Please... Help...

Luis hears it this time - or at least thinks he does. He  
turns away from the show that Faith is putting on and looks  
out the window.

FAITH

Which she drinks right off the rock  
hard stomach of her twenty-eight  
year-old boy toy!

CLAIRE

Oh, I'm starting to like this  
story.

DONNA (O.S.)

Help...

FAITH

Let's name him Rocco. Claire's new  
boy toy is...

(CONTINUED)

LUIS  
Be quiet!

FAITH  
Oh come on, don't be a party  
pooper.

LUIS  
I said shut up!

They all go silent.

DONNA (O.S.)  
(weak but loud enough to  
hear)  
Help me!

SAMANTHA  
Oh my God.

NAHIM  
There's someone out there.

They all rush to the windows, trying to get a look.

GAVIN  
Do you see anything?

LUIS  
No, it's too dark!

ABBY  
Where is it coming from?

ISAIAH  
I can't tell. Everybody quiet...

They all go silent again.

DONNA (O.S.)  
Please God...

ISAIAH  
It sounds like it's coming from...

LUIS  
It can't be.

ISAIAH  
One of them is alive.

LUIS  
They can't be! There's no way.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

Well, it must be. What else could it be?

DONNA (O.S.)

Please somebody!

ISAIAH

We have to go help her.

GAVIN

Are you crazy? I'm not going out there.

FAITH

We can't just leave her.

LUIS

This is not possible.

GAVIN

It could be a trick.

ABBY

What kind of trick?

GAVIN

Trying to lure us outside.

ABBY

You are out of your mind.

GAVIN

(to Luis)

What do you mean "not possible."

CLAIRE

Leave him alone, Gavin.

GAVIN

Tell me what you meant by "not possible."

LUIS

(beat)

There's no way anyone could've survived...

DONNA (O.S.)

Please help me!

ISAIAH

Obviously someone did survive. And they need our help.

(CONTINUED)

NAHIM

Even if that's true, you don't know  
if you could help her. What if you  
get out there and whatever did this  
in the first place kills you too?

ISAIAH

That's the risk I'm just going to  
have to take.

GAVIN

Well, it's not a risk I'm willing  
to take.

ISAIAH

Then you stay here.

SAMANTHA

And what if when you open that door  
it comes inside and kills all of  
us? Are you willing to risk all of  
our lives?

This stops Isaiah. As he is considering his options the  
lights begin to flicker and all of them look toward the  
ceiling.

GAVIN

What's going on?

SAMANTHA

Oh no. The power... I think the  
power is...

The lights flicker a few more times and then the lights go  
out completely. In the dark all we hear is Donna from the  
parking lot.

DONNA (O.S.)

(sobbing)

Please help me! Please!!!

Then nothing but silence in the dark.

**END ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

The lights come up on Peter, Donna, and Mike at the table just like the first time we saw them. The rest of the characters are not on stage yet.

DONNA

So much for an intelligent,  
reasonable debate.

PETER

But see, that's the problem!  
You're not reasonable.

DONNA

Why? Because I happen to have  
opinions that differ from yours?

PETER

No, because your opinions are not  
based in anything even remotely  
resembling reason.

MIKE

This is why people can't talk about  
politics.

DONNA

Why not?

MIKE

Because those kinds of  
conversations never lead anywhere  
good. They just repeat themselves  
over and over and no one ever  
learns anything.

The lights fade on them and we return to blackout.

From offstage we hear some commotion - boxes being moved around, a piece of metal clanging. After a few moments of this, the beam of a flashlight is seen in the kitchen, heading toward the main dining room.

Samantha and Luis come out of the kitchen. She is carrying the flashlight and he is carrying a box.

SAMANTHA

Found it. I knew I had a box of  
lanterns back there somewhere.

Isaiah, Nahim, Gavin, and Abby all gather around the center table and the box, illuminated only by the flashlight beam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (65)

They each take a lantern and go to various parts of the diner to light them.

Isaiah is first - he goes to the booth and lights the lantern. Nahim is next - he goes to the stage left table and does the same. Abby lights one at the downstage end of the counter while Gavin lights one at the upstage end.

SAMANTHA

How long has it been?

FAITH

Since what?

There is no immediate answer to that - only silence. Luis finally looks at his watch.

LUIS

(reluctantly)

About thirty minutes.

GAVIN

Maybe she just passed out. It's possible, right? She was quiet for hours so maybe...

As Gavin, Abby, and Isaiah all light their respective candles, the light warms over Donna, Peter, and Mike.

DONNA

I'm sorry, but I don't understand why we can't have a serious discussion, like adults, about world events and politics and religion and all of the other subjects that are "taboo" without it devolving into childish schoolyard name calling.

PETER

I know you are but what am I?

MIKE

It just doesn't work. Donna, you are... God love ya, but you're a right-wing, Make America Great Again, flag-waving, second amendment loving, anti-immigration, Republican and Peter, you're a bleeding-heart, liberal, tree hugging, big government Democrat. I believe the analogy I'm looking for has to do with oil and water.

(CONTINUED)

PETER

So what does that make you?

DONNA

Vinegar?

MIKE

No, no. I am Switzerland.  
Neutral. Centrist.

DONNA

So what can we talk about?

MIKE

Celebrity gossip.

PETER

Oh, please.

MIKE

It's the only safe topic. No one  
has ever gotten hurt discussing  
famous people doing stupid things.

DONNA

So you'd rather just be completely  
uninvolved in what's happening in  
the world?

MIKE

I'd rather just be completely  
uninvolved in this conversation.

The lights fade on them and go up dimly on the main diner.

CLAIRE

(to Samantha)

Is it all right if I get a cold  
drink, dear?

SAMANTHA

I'll get it.

Samantha starts to get up but Claire stops her.

CLAIRE

No... I need to stretch my legs  
anyway.

LUIS

Here. Take the flashlight.

Luis hands her the flashlight and she goes into the kitchen.  
There is some silence in the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (67)

GAVIN

Maybe it's a good thing. I mean,  
she can conserve her energy, right?

FAITH

Shut up.

GAVIN

We don't know...

FAITH

I said shut up, you stupid fuck!

Faith heads toward Gavin but Luis stops her.

LUIS

Faith!

She pulls free of him but stops her advance on Gavin.

FAITH

I just can't listen to this crap  
anymore! She's dead! You know it.  
I know it. We sat in here and we  
let that woman die because we were  
all too fucking scared to go out  
and help her.

Claire comes back with her drink, cautiously. She stays near  
the kitchen door, behind the counter between Mike and Donna.

GAVIN

I didn't see you rushing for the  
door.

FAITH

I swear to God I will gut you like  
a fish if you don't shut up!

Abby grabs her arm and pushes her to a stool at the counter.

ABBY

Sit down! Calm down.

Faith still appears ready to pop, but stays seated.

FAITH

Go ahead Abby. Give us the rousing  
speech. You know, the one about us  
sticking together? You know you're  
dying to.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (68)

FAITH (CONT'D)

Or you will be if you really believe that, because after seeing what we've done, or more to the point, haven't done for the last hour or so, I can guarantee you that there's not one person in this place who would trade their life for yours.

ABBY

I'm not asking anyone to. But I'm also not going to let us kill each other just because we can't hold it together. So, if you want to have a nervous breakdown go lock yourself in a closet and leave us out of it, okay?

She and Faith match glares for a minute but Faith finally backs down, at least a little.

The lights fade on the main part of the diner and come up on Donna, Peter, and Mike

DONNA

All I'm saying...

MIKE

Oh God...

PETER

See? She's unreasonable.

DONNA

All I'm saying is that it's a scary world out there. Crime is out of control. People streaming across the borders. We can't put blinders on and say "it'll all work out fine." That's not reality anymore.

PETER

Data is reality. And the data says immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, commit less crime than US born citizens.

DONNA

Where does that data come from? You can't trust everything you read especially if it's coming from the liberal media.

(CONTINUED)

PETER

Let me guess, you get your data from some stranger's post on Tik Tok.

DONNA

A lot of what you can find on social media doesn't get reported on the way it should be.

PETER

Because it isn't true! Don't you understand that you're being lied to? You're being brainwashed? It's like a horror movie with an army of mindless zombies.

MIKE

Speaking of the zombies, I just streamed that new zombie movie with what's his face. It was good.

Peter and Donna look at Mike.

MIKE

I'm just saying.

The lights fade on them and go back up on the main action.

NAHIM

It's only going to get worse, you know.

ABBY

What is?

NAHIM

Us. The longer we sit here. The longer we wait.

GAVIN

What choice do we have?

NAHIM

I don't know. But maybe we should at least discuss it.

GAVIN

What's to discuss? We go out there, we die.

FAITH

We stay in here, we die.

(CONTINUED)

NAHIM

We don't know that either one of those statements is true.

ABBY

Well, we know that we can't stay in here forever. That much at least is true.

NAHIM

The question then becomes how long do we wait?

LUIS

As long as it takes for help to show up.

ABBY

And what if it doesn't?

LUIS

So you want to go out and take a chance?

ABBY

I don't know. But I agree with Nahim that we should at least discuss it.

LUIS

As far as I'm concerned there's nothing to discuss. I'm staying.

ABBY

Fine. Then the rest of us can discuss it. Nahim?

NAHIM

Well, we have to look at this logically.

GAVIN

There is nothing logical about any of this.

NAHIM

True, but only because we've been acting out of fear and reacting to events instead of trying to analyze them and act accordingly.

GAVIN

I've already got a headache.

(CONTINUED)

FAITH

Can I please stab him to death?

NAHIM

All right, look... There's obviously no way we can ever know exactly what happened or what is happening. We're cut off from the outside world and it would seem that the outside world is cut off from us. But there are some things that we do know.

SAMANTHA

Like what?

NAHIM

We know that whatever killed those people did so outside.

GAVIN

Hence the whole "let's stay inside" thing.

NAHIM

Okay, but whatever it was stayed outside, right?

SAMANTHA

What's the difference?

NAHIM

The difference is that it didn't come after us.

CLAIRE

"It?"

NAHIM

He, she, they, it...

FAITH

Animal, vegetable, mineral...

NAHIM

Since we're dealing with an unknown let's just all agree to call it "it" for now.

ABBY

That's kind of creepy.

SAMANTHA

So it's kind of appropriate, right?

(CONTINUED)

NAHIM

So, there are basically two types of "its" that "it" could've been. Either a conscious, sentient being - a person, a pack of wild dogs...

CLAIRE

Aliens.

NAHIM

Aliens, sure, why not? Or an unconscious thing like lightning or radiation...

GAVIN

Or poison gas.

NAHIM

Yes. So the question is, under either type of threat, why hasn't it come after us?

GAVIN

(beat)

I think I speak for all of us when I say, huh?

NAHIM

If it was people or wild dogs or aliens why haven't they come in after us? Why haven't we seen any motion or movement? Why hasn't there been anything even trying to jiggle the doorknob to see if it's locked?

SAMANTHA

Maybe they're just waiting for us to come out.

NAHIM

But why? If they could do what they did to those people out there then why sit around and wait for us to poke our heads out? It seems that if they've got that much power they could just knock down the door and take care of us without all the hassle.

LUIS

Okay, so what if it isn't a person or wild dogs?

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

Or aliens. Don't forget aliens.

NAHIM

Well, then it gets a little bit more sticky but it still comes down to why hasn't it come inside? Radiation, poison gas, some sort of strange weather phenomenon... Abby made the point earlier that these boards wouldn't have stopped any of that.

LUIS

So you're saying the fact that we're still alive is your whole case for proving there is no more threat?

NAHIM

No, but I am saying that...

GAVIN

We keep going around and around about this and it's getting us nowhere.

NAHIM

If you would just listen...

GAVIN

I don't want to listen because you're not saying anything. You're just rambling to hear yourself talk.

ABBY

Well, some of us want to hear what he has to say.

GAVIN

Why? He's just going to get you killed if you listen to him.

ISAIAH

Stop!

They all turn to look at him, almost as if through his silence they had forgotten he was there.

ISAIAH

There's one flaw in your thinking, Nahim.

(CONTINUED)

NAHIM

Namely?

ISAIAH

There's a third category "it" could fall into. The unknown. "It" could be something we've never experienced. Something we've never seen. Never will see until it does to us what it did to them.

Something that has the power to practically rip the skin off of a human being and tear them in half before they even have a chance to know what's happening. Something that could leave a woman to die in a diner parking lot. Something that would make us sit here and listen to her beg for help and not do anything.

(beat)

You say that it hasn't come in to get us... I say it already has.

The lights fade on the main diner and come back up on Peter, Donna, and Mike.

PETER

Fear. It's all about the fear.  
It's how the 1% control the 99%.

DONNA

Ugh, the 1%. The big scary 1%.  
These are the people who create the jobs and the wealth and...

PETER

...and the laws and the rules that keep everyone else from attaining any real equality.

DONNA

What does that have to do with illegal immigration?

PETER

It's all connected. The powers that be use the specter of some "big bad" to keep the rest of us docile so they can get richer while we get poorer.

(CONTINUED)

DONNA

So people who work hard can't be rewarded for that?

PETER

Let me guess. Silver spoon?

DONNA

If I was rich I'd be flying first class to San Diego, not riding in the back of a crappy SUV.

MIKE

Hey!

DONNA

Sorry, but you know it's true.

MIKE

I know. But still.

PETER

(to Donna)

Fear is the basis of your side's entire argument. You're afraid.

DONNA

I'm not afraid of anything.

PETER

Except immigrants and terrorists and, let me guess, transgender people taking your sports medals and using your bathrooms?

DONNA

I'm not afraid of them, I just don't think...

PETER

...they should exist?

DONNA

Stop putting words in my mouth. Look, I understand what you're saying but all of the things you just brought up are complex issues and you can't deny that they impact us - everyone.

PETER

I agree.

MIKE

Wait, wait... She understands what you're saying and you agree. Can we stop there?

PETER

No.

DONNA

No.

MIKE

Great. Find something to make me feel guilty about and it'll be just like Christmas with my family.

The lights fade on Peter, Donna, and Mike and go back up on the main part of the diner.

FAITH

This is all stupid. All this looking at stuff logically. I say it comes down to a decision - either we stay or we go and I vote go. If I'm going to die at least I want to do it fighting.

LUIS

I already voted. I'm staying.

GAVIN

When did this turn into a democracy? You nutjobs do whatever you want but I'm sticking right here.

CLAIRE

I'm afraid I have to agree with these two. Maybe I'm just being a frightened old lady but if we were go get out there and get in trouble... This old body doesn't move as fast as it used to.

FAITH

Abby?

ABBY

Let's get every sharp knife and anything else we can possibly use as a weapon and head for the cars.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

I can't leave. This is my whole life here. I can't just run away from it.

NAHIM

Well, I haven't decided yet. And I'm not convinced that staying in here with the windows boarded shut until we run out of food or running out there waving knives around are our only two options.

FAITH

Okay, so that's four to stay and three to go. Reverend?

ISAIAH

(beat)  
Sunrise. We go at sunrise.

FAITH

So sayeth the prophet Isaiah.

Another silence envelops the room and a warm spot comes up on the table with Peter, Donna, and Mike.

PETER

(to Mike)  
So let me ask you a question.

MIKE

Guys, come on...

DONNA

Okay. Ask away.

MIKE

No, no more. I can't take it. Can't we just agree to disagree and leave it at that?

PETER

No. That's how fascism starts.

DONNA

Oh, God.

PETER

It is! It's that whole "there are good people on both sides" bullshit. I do not have to respect your position if your position is wrong.

(CONTINUED)

DONNA

But who gets to decide what's wrong?

PETER

The people who are right!

DONNA

So, then anyone who has a different opinion is automatically wrong and there can be no debate about it? That's fascism.

PETER

This is not about having an opinion. It's about facts and reality. The sky is blue. That's a fact. That is the reality. Why should I have a debate with someone who says the sky is red?

DONNA

Because sometimes the sky is red! During a sunset for example. Sometimes it's grey. Sometimes it's cloudy and you can't see the sky at all. "Facts" and "reality" are not always absolute and they can be manipulated to suit a particular viewpoint.

PETER

You should know. Your side is really good at manipulating facts.

DONNA

And your side never does that?

MIKE

Do you guys want to just go out into the parking lot and kill each other? It would be a lot faster.

PETER

Why are you so afraid of confrontation?

MIKE

Because it's bad for your complexion.

(CONTINUED)

PETER

So, you'd rather just sit in silence and let your anger and frustration build to the point of exploding?

MIKE

I'd prefer to think of it as developing a healthy glow.

PETER

I already have a skin care routine, thank you.

MIKE

You do?

PETER

What? Moisturizing is only for women and gay men?

MIKE

Who said I was gay?  
(off their looks)  
Okay, but you have to admit that moisturizing isn't usually high on most straight men's priority list.

PETER

Who said I was straight?  
(off their looks)  
Okay, but my point is, once again you are presuming "facts" that are not factual. The sky is sometimes red. Straight men sometimes care about their skin.

MIKE

You know what I care about?  
Eating.

Mike returns to his dinner and the spot on them fades.

Abruptly and without warning, the power comes back on - light flooding the room and the radio comes to life in the process, playing Patsy Cline's "I Fall to Pieces" loudly.

Mike, Donna, and Peter do not react, but the rest of the people in the room jump, scream, and recoil at the shock.

Samantha goes to shut off the radio.

GAVIN

What the hell?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (80)

NAHIM

The generator... It must've kicked on...

CLAIRE

Well, thank goodness. Certainly woke me up.

There is nervous laughter around the room as everyone relaxes a bit and they turn off the lanterns. Samantha looks around, clearly concerned.

SAMANTHA

This doesn't make any sense.

LUIS

What?

SAMANTHA

It... The generator doesn't just kick on by itself.

ABBY

Well, then how did the...

SAMANTHA

I don't know.

GAVIN

Are you sure?

SAMANTHA

Of course I'm sure! The only way to get it going is to flip the safety switch and then start it... Manually.

There is a pregnant pause.

FAITH

(freaking again)

Okay, that's it. That is it! There is something out there fucking with us and I am done being fucked with!

She goes into the kitchen.

ABBY

Faith...

GAVIN

What the hell are you doing? What is she doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (81)

Faith comes back out of the kitchen with a big, mean looking butcher knife.

FAITH

I am getting out of here.

LUIS

You are not opening that door.

FAITH

Watch me.

Faith heads for the door as Luis pulls a gun out of the waistband of his pants, previously hidden from view by his shirt.

LUIS

I said, you are not opening that door!

CLAIRE

Oh my God.

Faith sees the gun and grabs the nearest thing to her, which happens to be Gavin. She holds the knife to his throat.

SAMANTHA

Faith, no!

LUIS

Put the knife down.

FAITH

Put the gun down or I'll kill him.

LUIS

Fine, go ahead. But you're not opening that door.

FAITH

You're not going to shoot me.

LUIS

You said it yourself, Faith. If it's down to a choice between you and me who do you think I'm going to choose?

There is a tense stand-off - no one moves, no one breathes for a moment. Abby carefully steps in.

ABBY

Faith... please... Luis... this is insane. Please...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (82)

Faith releases her grip on Gavin, pushing him aside. She drops the knife to her side but does not release her grip.

LUIS  
I said drop the knife.

FAITH  
And I said: Fuck. You.

Faith turns and walks into the women's room, slamming the door behind her. Luis slowly lowers the gun.

The lights go down on the main diner and up on Peter, Donna, and Mike.

PETER  
It's funny.

DONNA  
What is?

PETER  
The three of us. Sitting here in this craphole of a diner.

MIKE  
Shhhh. We're in a roadside diner in the middle of Nevada. Somebody in here has a gun.

DONNA  
What's wrong with that?

PETER  
Ask the 40,000 people who die every year in this country because of them.

DONNA  
Guns don't kill people...

PETER  
Oh my God!

DONNA  
The second amendment...

PETER  
No! You do not get use the second amendment as an argument.

DONNA  
The Supreme Court does.

(CONTINUED)

PETER

First of all, it was written at a time when women didn't have the right to vote and Black people were considered to be three-fifths of a human being. Things change. Get over it. And second of all, you are only allowed to use second amendment if you can name the other nine in the bill of rights. If you can't, then shut up.

MIKE

Shutting up. That's a great idea. We should do that.

DONNA

I'm not going to shut up about my rights, Mike. I have a constitutionally protected right to own a gun.

PETER

And I have a constitutionally protected right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, none of which I can do if someone shoots me at the supermarket with a constitutionally protected semi-automatic rifle.

DONNA

That's actually from the Declaration of Independence. The Bill of Rights...

MIKE

How about we all invoke our fifth amendment right to stay silent?

The lights fade on them and come back up on the main diner. Gavin, pulls at his collar as he walks to the women's room.

GAVIN

Crazy fucking bitch. She was going to kill me!

NAHIM

She wouldn't have done it.

GAVIN

How do you know? Did you have a knife to your throat?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (84)

GAVIN (CONT'D)

We need to drag her out of there  
and tie her up or something before  
she goes crazy with that knife.

LUIS

Leave her.

GAVIN

What?!

LUIS

I said leave her. We're not tying  
anybody up.

GAVIN

Why not?

LUIS

Because if whatever is out there  
decides to come in here, I  
personally would rather have a  
crazy bitch with a knife fighting  
on our side, wouldn't you?

GAVIN

Well, I don't think it gets to be  
your decision.

LUIS

Guess what, asshole. The one with  
the gun gets to make the decisions.

SAMANTHA

Why do you have a gun anyway?

LUIS

None of your god damn business.

ABBY

We were looking for weapons! Why  
didn't you tell us about it? It  
might have made us feel...

LUIS

(mirthless chuckle)

Safe?

(beat)

Do you feel safe now?

Nobody has an answer to that.

The phone at the counter rings. Everyone just sort of stares  
at it for a heartbeat and then Nahim, who is closest, leaps  
for it and picks up the receiver.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (85)

NAHIM

Hello? Hello?! Is there somebody  
there? Hello?

He holds out the receiver toward Isaiah who is the next  
closest.

NAHIM

There's nobody there.

Isaiah takes the receiver and listens for a moment. He  
shakes his head as if to confirm what Nahim said and then  
hangs up the receiver. He picks it back up again and jiggles  
the cradle.

ISAIAH

No dial tone.

He hangs up the phone. Nobody knows what to do with that.

GAVIN

Great. That's great.

(to Luis)

Okay, Mr. I've Got the Gun So I'm  
In Charge. What do we do now?  
Because the bitch may be crazy but  
she's right about one thing:  
there's someone or something out  
there, messing with us. The  
generator didn't turn on by itself.  
The phone didn't just magically  
ring all by itself. It's playing  
with us. Like a cat plays with a  
mouse before...

LUIS

Shut up.

GAVIN

Before it kills us all!

LUIS

(points gun at Gavin)  
Shut up! I swear to God.

ISAIAH

God has nothing to do with this.

LUIS

For once, something we can agree  
on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (86)

Luis lowers the gun. There is yet another moment of very tense silence and then the lights flicker a little bit again. Everyone looks toward the ceiling.

CLAIRE

Not again... please God...

SAMANTHA

The air conditioning. The guy that installed the generator said it wasn't strong enough to run all the lights and the refrigeration and the air conditioning.

(beat)

I'm going to have to shut it off.

GAVIN

Luckily we're in the middle of the Nevada desert where it never gets hot.

SAMANTHA

Lights, food, air conditioning.  
All of the above is not an option.

Nobody responds. Samantha nods and goes into the kitchen.

The lights flicker again and seem to be getting ready to go out but then return to full force.

The lights fade on the main room and come up on Donna, Peter, and Mike. They eat in silence for a few beats.

MIKE

There. Isn't this nice? I knew we could get along.

DONNA

Is everything a joke to you?

MIKE

No, Donna, it's not. But I know when a situation needs a little diffusing unlike the two of you who only seem to know how to run around the dynamite factory with lit matches.

PETER

We are not arguing just for the sake of argument. This is important stuff.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

Yeah, it is. But nothing it is going to get solved amongst the three of us here at this table. You'll never convince her of anything. He'll never convince you. So, what's the point?

PETER

Okay, Mike, then what's your solution? We live in a divided country. Probably even more divided than it was when people started shooting at Fort Sumter. The only way to bridge that divide is to talk about what divides us.

DONNA

I thought you didn't want to talk to people who had different opinions than yours.

PETER

No, I don't want to talk to people who stupidly hold onto a belief system that is rooted in fear, prejudice, greed, and misinformation.

DONNA

And the divide just got a little bigger.

MIKE

That's what I'm saying! Every time you try to talk about it, it just gets worse.

PETER

But if we don't talk about it, it's going to get worse.

MIKE

Fine. If worse is inevitable, then I choose the option where we get to at least enjoy ourselves on the way down to oblivion. And on that happy note, I'm going to go take a piss.

(stands)

If the waitress comes tell her I want pie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (88)

Mike gets up and goes to the bathroom as the lights fade on the table with Peter and Donna and come up on the rest of the diner.

Samantha comes back out of the kitchen carrying the oscillating fan we saw the beginning. She puts on the counter, plugs it in, and turns it on.

Isaiah and Nahim step over to Abby, talking low so Luis, who is at the windows, won't hear.

ISAIAH

Abby. You were talking to Luis earlier. Should we be worried?

ABBY

What do you mean?

NAHIM

Did he say anything that would suggest it might not be in our best interest for him to have a gun.

ABBY

(beat)

No. He... he said he lost his job, but...

Nahim and Isaiah exchange a glance. Abby notices.

ABBY

That doesn't mean he's... I don't know. Unstable? Is that what you're saying?

NAHIM

We're just talking.

ABBY

Nahim, you said you were going to Las Vegas for a job interview. Are you out of work?

NAHIM

Yeah, but I don't have a gun.

ABBY

So, what? Are you going to take it away from him?

ISAIAH

That's what we're trying to decide.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (89)

ABBY

He's scared... and he's not going to give it up without a fight. If you do this, somebody could get hurt.

NAHIM

If we don't do it, somebody could get hurt.

Abby looks over at Luis.

ABBY

Let me go talk to him.

Isaiah and Nahim exchange another glance. Isaiah nods.

The focus shifts back to the table with Donna and Peter.

DONNA

So do you have a girlfriend? Oh, sorry. Do you have a gender-non-specific partner? I don't want to presume you're straight again.

PETER

Why do you want to know? Need a date for the big neo-Nazi convention this weekend?

DONNA

I'm not hitting on you, asshole. I'm just trying to find a topic that won't end with you throwing plates at my head.

PETER

I'm not sure such a topic exists.

DONNA

Are you always this combative?

PETER

Only when provoked.

DONNA

How is asking if you have a girlfriend provoking? I'm sorry, is it "triggering," too? Do you need to go to a safe space?

(CONTINUED)

PETER

Remember that part about wanting to find something to talk about that won't end with me throwing plates at your head? This isn't it.

DONNA

Most men would be flattered.

PETER

Most men are stupid.

DONNA

No, they're not. Men are great. I love men. When they act like them.

PETER

I could scratch my balls and spit on the floor if you'd like.

DONNA

Have you talked to women lately? All this "oh, I'm a second class citizen," crap. It's exhausting.

PETER

I can't believe I'm hearing this. You're a woman! A Black woman! Are you really suggesting that you have the same kind of opportunities as white men?

DONNA

Yes, because I don't play identity politics. The thing that holds people back is when they put themselves in boxes. Women have the same rights as men. People of color have the same rights as whites. Gays have the same rights as straights. But they spend so much time playing victim and blaming everyone else for their problems as opposed to taking personal responsibility.

Mike returns to the table.

MIKE

So what did I miss?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (91)

PETER

We were just talking about women's roles in a patriarchal society.

MIKE

(beat)

I'm going back to the bathroom.

Mike goes back to the bathroom and the focus shifts back to the others.

Luis is still at the front window. Abby comes over to sit next to him.

ABBY

Hey.

(off his lack of response)

Are you okay?

LUIS

Yeah.

ABBY

(beat)

Listen, I'm sorry about...

(shakes her head)

Everything is just... We're all on the same side here.

LUIS

Are we? I see the way they're looking at me. I'm as much of a threat to them as whatever is outside killing people.

ABBY

You pointed a gun at us, Luis.

LUIS

(mirthless chuckle)

I'm the brown guy. I was a threat long before they found out I had a gun.

ABBY

Hey, you think I don't know what it's like to be judged the moment you walk through a door? Do you know how many times I've been followed around a store because they think I'm shoplifting? Do you know how many times I've been pulled over by the police for bullshit reasons. I get it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (92)

ABBY (CONT'D)

But all you did by pulling that gun  
is play into their biases.

LUIS

You think I give a fuck about their  
racism? I don't. I don't give a  
fuck about anything other than  
what's out...

(looks out window - jumps)

Shit!

ABBY

What? What is it?

LUIS

Something... something's moving.  
There's something out there!

There is a general din of excited voices as everyone rushes  
toward Luis and Abby. Isaiah and Nahim run to the other end  
of the window and the door to peer out through.

ISAIAH

What is it?

LUIS

I don't know. It's dark.

GAVIN

Where?

LUIS

On the other side of the road. It  
was... I don't know.

ISAIAH

I don't see anything.

LUIS

It was there!

SAMANTHA

Okay, just calm down.

LUIS

I saw something out there!

CLAIRE

Luis, it's okay.

Isaiah turns away from the door. Looks around.

ISAIAH

Why didn't she come out?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (93)

NAHIM

What?

ISAIAH

Faith. Why didn't she come out  
when the phone rang or when we...

Everyone looks at the bathroom door.

GAVIN

Somebody go check.

Samantha stands and heads toward the bathroom. She knocks.

SAMANTHA

Faith? It's Sam. Are you okay?

There is no response. She knocks again.

SAMANTHA

Faith?

Samantha looks back at the room.

SAMANTHA

Faith, I'm coming in, okay? It's  
just me... I'm alone, okay?

She pushes the door open and goes into the bathroom. The door swings shut behind her. There is a pregnant pause and a moment later Samantha comes back out, obviously shaken.

SAMANTHA

She's gone.

NAHIM

Gone?

ISAIAH

What?

Nahim and Isaiah run into the bathroom.

SAMANTHA

She pried the boards off the  
window. Crawled out.

Luis looks back out the window.

LUIS

It must have been her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (94)

GAVIN

(to Luis)

I thought you said the window was too small for anyone to get through.

LUIS

I thought it was... but...

Nahim and Isaiah come back out of the bathroom.

NAHIM

She could've wriggled through.

ISAIAH

Did you see her out there?

ABBY

No. I don't see anything.

NAHIM

I'm going to put the boards back up.

CLAIRE

But what if she comes back?

LUIS

She made her choice.

There is silence for a beat, then Nahim goes into the bathroom again.

Mike comes back to the table from the bathroom and the focus shifts to Donna, Peter, and Mike. Mike sits.

During the following we hear hammering from the bathroom.

MIKE

Cats.

DONNA

What?

MIKE

Cats. I have decided cats are the only safe thing for us to talk about.

DONNA

I like cats.

PETER

I'm more of a dog person myself.

(CONTINUED)

DONNA  
See! Combative.

PETER  
How is liking dogs combative?!

DONNA  
Because you just said that so you  
could disagree with me.

PETER  
I did not! I like dogs.

MIKE  
Air! Can we all agree that air is  
a good thing?

PETER  
Sure. When it's not polluted by  
rich corporations raping the earth  
of it's natural resources.

There is a pause as Donna and Mike look at him.

PETER  
Okay, maybe that was a little  
combative.

The focus shifts back to the main group as Nahim comes out of  
the bathroom.

NAHIM  
It's done.

Samantha notices Claire, who doesn't look well - one hand to  
her head, one to her chest.

SAMANTHA  
Claire... are you okay?

CLAIRE  
Oh, I'm fine... I'll be fine.

SAMANTHA  
You look... I'm going you some more  
water.

CLAIRE  
Thank you, dear.

Samantha goes into the kitchen. Abby goes to Claire.

ABBY  
Claire, what's going on?

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE  
Don't worry about me. It's...

ABBY  
Claire...

CLAIRE  
(beat)  
This happens every now and then.

Samantha comes back with water - hands it to Claire.

CLAIRE  
Thank you.

NAHIM  
What happens, Claire?

CLAIRE  
It's just a little thing with my  
heart.

SAMANTHA  
Oh my God...

CLAIRE  
No, no, no, it's fine.

ISAIAH  
What kind of "little thing."

CLAIRE  
Everyone stop making a fuss. This  
happens, I just need to...

ABBY  
You just need to what?

CLAIRE  
(beat)  
Take my pills.

GAVIN  
Okay...

CLAIRE  
I left them in the car.

There is a pregnant pause as everyone absorbs that for a  
moment. Then Abby heads for the front door.

ABBY  
Which one is your car?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (97)

LUIS  
What you doing?

SAMANTHA  
Abby...

ABBY  
She needs her pills.

LUIS  
Get away from the door.

Abby has reached the door, ignoring him. Luis pulls and points the gun.

ISAIAH  
Luis! Please.

LUIS  
I said stop!

ABBY  
What are you going to do? You're going to shoot me and let Claire die?

CLAIRE  
Please stop. This is not...

ABBY  
Which car is yours, Claire?

NAHIM  
Abby, Luis... let's talk about this.

LUIS  
There is nothing to talk about. You are not opening that door.

GAVIN  
Abby, back off...

ABBY  
Claire is...

GAVIN  
I don't care.  
(to Claire)  
I'm sorry, lady, but I don't.  
(to all)  
You open that door and we're all dead. Either it...  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (98)

GAVIN (CONT'D)

whatever the fuck *it* is will come  
in here and kill us all or that  
crazy bitch with the knife will.

(to Luis)

If she moves, blow her fucking head  
off.

And we are back to a stand off.

ISAIAH

Okay, everybody just calm down.  
Let's just discuss this.

LUIS

There is nothing to discuss.

Nahim approaches Luis.

NAHIM

Luis, please... give me the gun.

LUIS

Fuck off.

Claire starts to stand.

CLAIRE

Stop, can't we...

Claire collapses on the floor.

SAMANTHA

Oh my God, Claire.

Samantha and Isaiah rush to Claire.

ISAIAH

She's not breathing. Claire!!

As Samantha and Isaiah try to revive Claire, Abby turns back  
to the door. Luis points the gun more emphatically.

LUIS

Stop!

ABBY

Luis, listen to me! I don't know  
what you... the only way we survive  
this... We don't know what the  
world looks like out there. We  
don't know if there even is a  
world. But whatever it is we  
can't...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (99)

ABBY (CONT'D)

Even if we survive this, what is it going to mean if we let her die?!

Luis struggles with this for a moment... then slowly lowers the gun.

ABBY

Thank you.

Abby starts to take one of the boards off of the door but before she can get very far, suddenly there is a furious banging from the other side. We hear Faith from off.

FAITH (O.S.)

Help! Let me in! LET ME IN!!

Abby backs away from the door as Faith keeps banging and screaming.

NAHIM

That's Faith!

Nahim rushes toward the door to join Abby in pulling boards off.

FAITH (O.S.)

Help me!!!

GAVIN

What are you doing?! Stop them!

The lights start to flicker as they did before. Everybody glances up.

SAMANTHA

The lights... oh God...

This distracts Luis long enough for Gavin to rush him and grab the gun.

Gavin backs away and points it at Nahim and Abby, even as Faith's screaming continues.

FAITH (O.S.)

Please, help me!! Let me in!

GAVIN

Stop!!

The lights flicker and start to go out just as we see Nahim rush at Gavin.

There is a total black out and we hear a shot, screams, and three more shots in rapid succession.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (100)

There is complete silence for a moment and then the lights come back up on Donna, Peter, and Mike.

MIKE

(looks at menu)

So, who else is in on the pie? I'm thinking banana cream.

DONNA

I prefer chocolate.

MIKE

I don't like chocolate.

Donna and Peter both drop their respective forks and gape at him. Mike looks back at them, confused.

MIKE

What?

PETER

Who doesn't like chocolate?

DONNA

Yeah man, that's just freaky.

PETER

Circus freaky.

DONNA

(to Peter)

I never did trust him.

PETER

Shifty. You can see it in the eyes.

MIKE

Are you two finished?

DONNA

I don't know if I can go another 350 miles with someone who doesn't like chocolate.

PETER

We could leave him here.

DONNA

It's his car.

PETER

People who don't like chocolate shouldn't be allowed to have cars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (101)

DONNA

Good point.

MIKE

Immigration.

DONNA

What?

MIKE

I've decided I like it better when you two are fighting. Immigration. Build a wall. Make Mexico pay for it. Discuss.

DONNA

Oh, don't get me started on that...

PETER

Oh, here we go...

The lights fade on Donna, Peter, and Mike to full black.

After a moment, Abby turns on the lantern where she is sitting at the stage left table, staring blankly.

Samantha turns on the lantern at the booth looking through the crack between the boards.

Luis turns on the lantern at the downstage end of the lunch counter, then puts his head on his hands.

Claire, Nahim, and Gavin are all absent.

After a beat, Isaiah comes in from the kitchen. He sits at the table with Abby. She looks at him.

ABBY

Did you pray for them?

ISAIAH

(beat)

I prayed for all of us.

Luis raises his head - can't look at them.

LUIS

This is not... I'm sorry.

Nobody responds to that.

SAMANTHA

The sun is coming up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (102)

ISAIAH

Do you see anything?

SAMANTHA

No. Everything out there is dead.

There is a pause as they all think about what has happened.

Abby puts her hands on the table, then stands.

She walks toward the door as she fishes a car key out of her pocket. When she gets to the door, she looks through the crack in the boards, aims the key, and presses a button.

A beat later, from off, we hear the sound of a car engine starting.

Abby waits a beat then presses the button again. The engine sound stops.

LUIS

What are you doing?

ABBY

When the sun is all the way up, I'm leaving. My car is parked right in front. Twenty steps from the door. I'll start it remotely. Unlock the doors. If you want to come with me, you better be able to run fast, because once I'm behind the wheel, I'm gone.

SAMANTHA

Abby... Faith is... Whatever is out there...

ABBY

Whatever is out there?  
(mirthless chuckle)  
Samantha, it can't be any worse than what's in here.

LUIS

Abby, I...

ABBY

I'm not talking about you, Luis. I'm talking about all of us. What happened here... We all have blood on our hands.

(to Isaiah)

Back me up here, Reverend.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (103)

ABBY (CONT'D)

What's that bible verse about allowing evil to happen?

ISAIAH

(beat)

*"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."*

(beat)

But that was Edmund Burke. Not the bible. Proverbs 24 is a little more clear on the subject.

SAMANTHA

What does it say?

ISAIAH

*"Rescue those being taken off to death and save those stumbling toward slaughter."*

As they all consider this, the lights fade on them and come up on Donna, Peter, and Mike.

DONNA

So, we should have totally open borders?

PETER

Oh, my God, stop twisting what I'm saying.

DONNA

Okay, fine, then explain how not having some sort of actual border at the border is something other than an open border?

MIKE

Stop saying borders.

PETER

You started this.

MIKE

I changed my mind. Go back to making fun of me.

DONNA

No, this is important and I really want to understand what he's saying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (104)

PETER

Why? Why is understanding this more important than anything else I've been saying that you've been ignoring?

DONNA

Because I understand everything else. I don't agree with it, but I understand it. This makes no sense to me.

PETER

That's because you look at it as a safety issue while I look at it as a moral one.

DONNA

So, now we're back to I'm afraid, right?

MIKE

Oh for God's sake, shut up. Both of you! The biggest problem in this country right now is not immigration or climate change or guns or trans people or who is in the White House or on the Supreme Court, it's that too many people have been led to believe that life is a zero sum game. If I have something it means you don't. If I earn something, it is stopping you from earning your own. Other people are taking things that you deserve. Other people have things they won't share. Other people are demanding rights that infringe on yours. Other people are a threat, life is a competition, and the only way to win is to make sure that everybody else loses. That is what has led America to the breaking point. We have chosen sides and we are ready to walk out that door and go to war. The problem is that life is not a zero sum game and if you play it like is, nobody wins.

The lights fade on Donna, Peter, and Mike and come up on Abby, Isaiah, Luis, and Samantha.

Abby and Isaiah are packing basic survival items into a duffel bag and a backpack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (105)

Luis is in the booth looking outside.

Samantha comes in from the kitchen carrying a few more bottles of water and cans of food.

SAMANTHA

I found some more...

Samantha hands the bottles and cans to Isaiah.

ISAIAH

I think that's about all we can carry with us. Anything more is going to slow us down.

ABBY

Where's the gun?

ISAIAH

(beat)

I hid it in the kitchen. It only has two rounds left in it.

ABBY

Luis. Do you have more bullets?

LUIS

(beat)

No. I only thought I was going to need one.

Abby, Isaiah, and Samantha look at Luis.

LUIS

When I lost my job, I... My family was counting on me. I was supposed to...

(beat)

This was supposed to be the land of opportunity.

They let that sit for a moment. Isaiah goes into the kitchen then returns a moment later with the gun.

He walks over to Luis and holds the gun out to him. Luis is surprised.

ISAIAH

Life doesn't offer many second chances. Use it wisely.

Luis hesitates and then nods, taking the gun from Isaiah. The lights stay up on the main action and come up on Donna, Peter, and Mike as well.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY

Okay... are we ready?

DONNA

Are we ready to get out of here?

ISAIAH

As ready as we're going to get.

PETER

Yes, please.

MIKE

I didn't get pie.

SAMANTHA

You know it's not too late to just stay here and have some pie.

DONNA

Oh. Pie does sound good.

LUIS

I could go for a piece of pie right about now.

PETER

The sooner we get on the road, the less time we have to spend together.

Peter, Mike, and Donna look at each other.

Abby, Luis, Samantha, and Isaiah do the same.

Abby takes the car key out of her pocket and aims it at the front door, but before she can push the button, the phone rings.

Peter, Mike, and Donna all stand.

DONNA

I'll get the check.

Donna goes up to the register as Samantha goes to the phone.

Samantha picks up the receiver.

SAMANTHA

Hello?

Donna puts the check and some money down on the counter in front of Samantha.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (107)

DONNA

Hi. Keep the change.

Donna, Mike, and Peter go to the front door, open it, and exit, shutting the door behind them.

Samantha looks at Abby, Isaiah, and Luis, then puts the receiver back down on the counter (not on the phone), where it was when we opened.

Samantha goes back to join the others.

Abby aims the remote and pushes the button. We hear the car engine start from off.

Abby, Isaiah, Luis, and Samantha exchange one last glance and then Luis opens the door, gun ready.

They exit, leaving the door open behind them.

There are a few beats and the sound of the engine fades.

The lights flicker and come back on, as does the fan.

We are exactly how we started.

Donna, Peter, and Mike enter and go to the table.

PETER

So much for an intelligent,  
reasonable debate.

MIKE

But see, that's the problem!  
You're not reasonable.

PETER

Why? Because I happen to have  
opinions that differ from yours?

MIKE

No, because your opinions are not  
based in anything even remotely  
resembling reason.

DONNA

This is why people can't talk about  
politics.

PETER

Why not?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (108)

DONNA

Because those conversations never  
lead anywhere good. They just  
repeat themselves over and over and  
no one ever learns anything.

Donna takes a pause. She looks at the audience.

DONNA

This is how the world ends.

Black out.

**END**