

SNAKE RIVER RISING

by

R. B. Taylor

FADE IN:

EXT. FISHER HOUSE - DAY

A stylish house in an exclusive Sherman Oaks neighborhood.

A sprinkler BURSTS into life, spraying neat flower beds and manicured lawns.

EXT. FISHER BACKYARD - DAY

Clear blue water LAPS gently in a pool.

Water BUBBLES in a Japanese water feature.

A bedroom light illuminates on the second story. A bathroom light switches on in a frosted bathroom window. Then a second bedroom light.

A toilet FLUSHES. A third bedroom lights up. A shower GUSHES in the bathroom.

INT. FISHER GARAGE - DAWN

TOM FISHER, early 40s, a man used to success, is at the wheel of his idling Suburban. He's in good shape, which comes from the pool and treadmill. The tan comes from the golf course.

TOM

Everybody organized? Everybody got everything?

ELLA

Everything except a life.

Tom's daughter ELLA, 17 is in the back seat. She's going through that phase - the suburban punk chic shtick.

TOM

Ella, it's our first vacation together in four years.

ELLA

I don't know why we didn't talk about it. Daddy, you're the one who says we don't communicate anymore. So why didn't you "communicate"?

TOM

You're right. I should have put it on your Facebook page.

Tom's wife LAURA, early 40s, sits beside him. She's lost some of her looks, but not much. She scrolls through information on her iPad, but turns to look at Ella.

LAURA

Ella, honey, it's only a week.

ELLA

Do you know what I could be doing this week?

TOM

Yes I do. Because you won't stop telling me about the parties and the concerts and Aaron, who frankly, I hope never becomes part of this family.

ELLA

As if.

TOM

Nathan, you probably don't remember our last vacation?

NATHAN

Yes, I do. We came home when they called you back to work.

Tom looks guilty.

TOM

It won't happen this time.

ELLA

We can pray.

Tom hits the GPS which activates a route map on the screen and a HONEYED FEMALE VOICE.

GPS

Good morning.

TOM

Good morning.

Tom reverses.

NATHAN

Dad!

The brakes SCREECH. The Suburban pulls up an inch from the closed garage door.

EXT. FISHER HOUSE, FRONT - DAY

The sprinkler dies. Water TRICKLES down the driveway and into the gutter. It DRIBBLES into a storm drain.

The Suburban drives off under a cloudless blue sky.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

A whitewater raft bounces off raging whitewater rapids.

DONOVAN, 20, blond dreads beneath his helmet, sporty and handsome in an Xtreme way, pilots the raft, wielding his paddle expertly.

The rafters all wear helmets and life jackets: a LOUDMOUTH, 25, his BUDDY, 25 and a suburban family, MOM, DAD, teenage SON and DAUGHTER.

The raft ricochets from wave to wave. The Loudmouth and his Buddy WHOOP and HOLLER. The Family all look nervous. The raft hits a wave and the SON almost flips out of the raft.

DONOVAN

Lock those feet in.

The Son locks his foot under the gunwale.

The raft dips, almost vertical, and careers into a hole. The Daughter SCREAMS. The raft corkscrews mid-air, then hits the water with a BANG.

The raft slews. It 180s and hits the next wave backwards.

Donovan digs in the water, the raft catches a big wave and it is suddenly airborne. It hits the water with a SLAP. Then sails into calmer water.

DONOVAN

You all got through Devil's
Playground. That's worth five.

Everyone raises their paddles and high fives them.

LOUDMOUTH

Not bad. It was OK.

DONOVAN

Hey, man, that's some of the best
water in the contiguous forty-
eight.

LOUDMOUTH

I've seen better.

Donovan shrugs, but manages to stay shtum.

INT. SUBURBAN - DAY

Ella sways to the music in her earphones. Her texting fingers fly across her iPhone.

Nathan slays hideous monsters on his iPad.

Laura wears her headphones and studies a House For Sale on her iPad. She punches in information on her keyboard.

TOM
Sweetheart, we're on vacation.

LAURA
I can't afford to be on vacation.

TOM
We're leaving all that behind us
for a week.

Laura snarls at the image of a House for Sale on the iPad.

LAURA
Goddam it, Tom. I missed out on a
sale.

NATHAN
You're fighting again.

LAURA
No.

TOM
Of course not.

NATHAN
You're fighting a lot lately.

TOM
You sit back and take it easy.
We're gonna hit that river. Drop a
line. Go kayaking. Ziplining.

Nathan frowns.

ELLA
Stop it, dad. I think you're
scaring him.

GPS
Destination is six hundred and
thirteen miles.

Laura glares at the GPS.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

The Rafters see a line of sharp jagged rocks a hundred yards ahead. Mom and Dad frown at the water hurling itself furiously at the rocks.

DONOVAN

This is the Razorback. Nothing to get paranoid about. I rafted this river before I could walk.

Dad smiles and nods - but still nervous.

Loudmouth points to the wild whitewater running through the middle of the river.

LOUDMOUTH

We should be out in that, man.

DONOVAN

Too fast. Too deep. When the water's this high I don't know what's down there.

LOUDMOUTH

Aaah, this is pussy water.

DAD

Excuse me, there are children present.

LOUDMOUTH

And if there weren't any goddam kids, I could have a decent raft.

DONOVAN

There's plenty of good water to come. We got Twin Peaks. We got Hellhole coming up.

Donovan scans the water, looking for something.

LOUDMOUTH

You lose something?

DONOVAN

The marker. It's a rock. Water's so high, I can't see it. It should -

A razor-sharp rock looms out of a water hole. The raging current sucks the raft toward the rock. Donovan leans into his paddle, forcing the raft left.

DONOVAN

Back paddle!! Five!!

Everyone back paddles furiously. Donovan leans into his paddle, pecs and abs straining. The raft rocks and rolls in the roiling water and rockets toward the rock. Donovan strains, leaning right out of the raft. It bounces off the wickedly sharp rock.

The Son flies out of the raft. The mother SCREAMS.

Donovan leans out of the raft and holds out his paddle. The terrified Son grabs it and Donovan hauls him onto the raft.

The raft 180s in the violent water. It SMASHES into a rock, BOUNCES off a second rock. It corkscrews in mid-air.

Mom and Dad and Daughter cling to the gunwale ropes.

Razorback looms - as big as a house.

DONOVAN

Brace!

Donovan fights the out-of-control raft. The Loudmouth drops his paddle and clings to the gunwale rope.

Razorback looms. Forty yards. Thirty yards. The Loudmouth panics and stands up.

DONOVAN

Geddown! Geddown!!!

The raft CANNONS off a rock and the Loudmouth catapults through the air and hits Razorback head and helmet first.

The raft slingshots off Razorback and into the calm channel.

Donovan dives back into the swirling, foaming whitewater. He grabs the bleeding, unconscious Loudmouth.

INT. DINER - DAY

Tom sits opposite Nathan in a booth, watches him on his iPad. Tom turns the iPad away.

TOM

Talk to me.

Nathan looks blankly at his father.

TOM

Your teacher says you're withdrawn and you're not engaging with the other kids.

NATHAN

You've never met my teacher.

TOM

Your mother told me. She says all your friends are online. Nate, I know you've got a brain the size of Colorado. It must be amazing living in that head of yours, but there's a real world out there.

Nathan nods uncertainly. Tom sees Laura and Ella approach.

TOM
Why does it take two women to go to
the bathroom?

NATHAN
I dunno.

TOM
Me neither. But if you find out,
let me know, huh?

Nathan grins. Laura and Ella sit at the booth.

TOM
I ordered for everyone.

ELLA
How could you possibly know what I
want?

Ella's cell chirps an incoming text. She grabs it.

TOM
Ella, sweetheart.

ELLA
It's important.

TOM
Life or death important?

ELLA
Way more important.

TOM
Ella. After breakfast.

Ella reluctantly pushes her cell away. A second cell phone
RINGS. Laura fishes her cell out of her purse.

LAURA
I gotta take this.

TOM
Honey -

LAURA
I haven't had a sale in two months,
Tom. We need this.

Laura rises and exits. Ella smiles and picks up her cell.

TOM
No!

Ella pouts.

EXT. DINER FOYER - DAY

Tom exits the diner as Laura approaches. She shakes her head.

LAURA

No sale.

Tom hugs her.

TOM

We'll relax and recharge. When we go home we'll be fine.

LAURA

This economy. Sometimes I feel like we're caught up in some irresistible force. We're powerless to stop it.

Laura clings to Tom.

INT. SUBURBAN - DAY

Tom and Laura climb into the car. Nathan sits alone in the back seat.

LAURA

Where's your sister?

Nathan points toward the highway.

Tom and Laura's POV:

Ella hitchhikes on the highway.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Ella sticks out her thumb. A pick-up pulls up in front of her. Its passenger door opens. Ella strides toward it.

The Suburban swerves between Ella and the pick-up and SCREECHES to a halt in a cloud of dust. Laura leaps out.

LAURA

Ella, where are you going?

ELLA

Home.

LAURA

No you're not.

ELLA

I got someone's eyes I'm gonna scratch out.

Tom gets out of the car.

TOM

Ella, get back in the car, honey.

ELLA

No! I never wanted to come on this stupid-ass vacation. Nathan doesn't want to go. Do you want to go, Mom? No! You told me. None of us want to go.

Tom considers. He shrugs.

TOM

If you really don't want to go, we'll turn around and go home.

LAURA

Tom, honey, get back in the car.

Tom is reluctant. She pushes him back in the car.

LAURA

Your father didn't want me to tell you, but he lost his job.

ELLA

What?

LAURA

They fired him.

ELLA

But daddy's... He's the CEO. They can't fire him. What did he do?

LAURA

He did his job, that's what he did. And he'll hate me for telling you this, but he's kind of scared. Like he's failed. Or let us down. So, this vacation, us, his family all together, it means a lot to him.

Ella nods - a little shaken.

INT. SUBURBAN - DAY

Tom watches Laura put her arm around Ella's shoulders. They move to the car and get in.

TOM

We good?

LAURA

We're good.

Ella stares at the screensaver of herself and Aaron, smiling lovingly on her iPhone. She blinks back the tears.

NATHAN

I'd delete that if I were you.

Ella forces a smile, then deletes the screensaver. The Suburban eases onto the highway.

ELLA

Sorry, daddy.

TOM

It's all right, honey.

GPS

Destination is four hundred and fifty two miles.

TOM

Hey, we're almost nearly approximately half way there.

Ella forces a smile.

EXT. JOEY'S WHITEWATER RAFTING OFFICE - DAY

Donovan rinses life jackets in a giant tub. JOEY, 45, a weatherbeaten raft operator, steams in.

JOEY

The good news is he didn't break his neck.

DONOVAN

Tell 'em to operate. See if they can find a brain.

JOEY

And he's threatening to sue. Do you know what this'll do to my insurance premium?

DONOVAN

Man, it's quick out there. I ain't seen it so fast or deep. Gets any higher, they're gonna have to close the river.

JOEY

We're not closing the river. You know how much it costs to run this business? Goddam River Rat, I oughta fire your ass.

Joey storms out. Donovan picks up the Loudmouth's cracked helmet and tosses it in the trash can.

INT. SUBURBAN - DUSK

Tom drives along a secondary highway. He slows when he sees an approaching hotel - comfortable, inviting. Laura dozes beside him.

GPS
Destination is two hundred and
twelve miles.

Tom sees Laura dozing beside him. He makes a decision and speeds past.

ELLA
That's our hotel, daddy.

TOM
We'll drive through. Get there
tonight.

Ella looks mutinous. Tom silences her with a frown. Light rain SPLASHES the windshield.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, TOWN LIMITS - NIGHT

Heavy rain buckets on the Suburban. Its headlights pick out an approaching sign: Snake River - Always Welcoming.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Ella and Nathan spot the Snake River sign.

ELLA
I hate snakes.

NATHAN
I hate rivers.

The rain BATTERS the Suburban's roof. Laura shivers and glances apprehensively at Tom. Tom ramps up the wipers. They SLAP across the windshield. Nathan shivers.

INT. STATE METEOROLOGY DEPARTMENT, SNAKE RIVER RELAY - NIGHT

A dark, cramped work space.

NED, 45, a trog type with ZZ Top beard and thick spectacles sits at his desk and takes a bite of his donut. He keys in a command on his computer and checks the barometric field on his computer. It swirls ominously.

Ned nervously scratches himself.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER DAM, WALL - NIGHT

Rain pours on HARVEY, 40, the Dam's Chief Engineer, in a rain slicker, who gazes at the water swirling only inches below the top of the wall.

INT. CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBER - NIGHT

Mayor ANNIE, 40s, a former hippie chick, environmentalist, activist, presides at the head of the conference table.

Joey, the raft operator and RUSS, 50, Head of the Chamber of Commerce sit to one side of her.

ROY the SHERIFF, 50s and WARREN, 40, the Town Engineer sit on Annie's other side.

The phone BUZZES. Annie presses a button.

ANNIE

We're all here now, Harvey. What have you got for us?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SNAKE RIVER DAM, OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

A dim light glows on the dungeon-like ops room. Harvey sits at a battered old desk and is on the phone. He monitors the panel of gauges and dials and levers which have been there since the dam was built in 1935.

HARVEY

Water's up to record levels. I got last winter's snow and I got last week's rain pouring off the mountains. I got forty miles of fast river hitting my dam wall.

RUSS

It's only a little rain, Harvey.

HARVEY

There's more on the way. And it could be a real Noah.

JOEY

Doesn't mean it's gonna dump on us.

HARVEY

No. If the wind stays south, it'll pass by. But if it shifts...

ANNIE

What are you proposing, Harvey? A release?

HARVEY

Exactly. A controlled release.

JOEY

Which'll flood the valley, right?

HARVEY

It will create a flood situation,
that is correct.

ANNIE

What levels are we talking about,
Harvey?

HARVEY

Road closures. Town'll be cut off -

CONTINUE INTERCUTTING:

JOEY

What do you think that'll do for
local business, Harvey?

HARVEY

- Main Street will be under water.
Maybe two or three feet.

WARREN

Town goes under, I'm gonna have to
cut the power.

JOEY

Great. So we tell all the tourists
to go home. You think they'll come
back next year? You think they'll
ever come back?

RUSS

Harvey, this town's been doing it
tough of late. You release that
dam, you're gonna put people out of
business.

HARVEY

If I don't release. If we get this
Noah -

JOEY

It's perfectly safe. I've got
rafters out on the river as we
speak.

HARVEY

- If that dam blows...

RUSS

You're being alarmist, Harvey.

ANNIE
Harvey, no one is in immediate
danger, right?

Annie, Joey, Russ, Warren, and Sheriff listen anxiously.

EXT. MAIN ST - NIGHT

Rain beats down on Floyd's Barber Shop. An old cinema. A bookstore. A drugstore. A Mom & Pop diner. All very '50s. All very closed.

Water cascades along the gutter, past the Suburban, which is parked in front of the Snake River Tavern.

Two rednecks CARL, 30 and JIMBO, 30, lurch from the tavern. Laura winds down her window.

LAURA
Excuse me, do you know anywhere to
eat round here?

Carl, more tattoos than teeth grins at Laura. He leans on the side of the Suburban. Tom exits the Tavern.

CARL
You bring me a bottle of Jack Black
and I'll cook you anything you
want, little lady.

Jimbo snickers, then leers at Ella through the rear passenger window. Tom appears beside them.

TOM
Excuse me.

CARL
You're excused, mister.

TOM
Would you mind getting off my car?

CARL
You askin' or tellin'?

TOM
I'm politely asking you to -

JIMBO
He's off the car.

CARL
It's good you're so polite 'n' all?
What you gonna do? Call Security?

Tom and Carl lock eyes. Jimbo steps forward menacingly.

LAURA
Let's go, Tom.

Tom moves to the driver's side of the car and climbs in.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom climbs in the car. Carl and Jimbo leer at Ella, who shrinks back. They cackle with laughter. Tom reaches for the door handle but Laura grabs his wrist.

Tom starts up the Suburban. He looks in the rear view mirror and sees Carl and Jimbo climb into a cherry red, jacked-up Ford F-350 which is parked behind them.

The F-350's engine ROARS. The headlights fire. Then the hunting lights - they're trapped in the glaring light.

Tom tenses. The huge truck inches forward. It's bumper kisses the Suburban. Ella and Nathan are terrified. Tom reaches for the door handle.

LAURA
Don't try to be a hero, Tom.

Tom hits the gas and the Suburban roars off.

EXT. MAIN ST - NIGHT

The Suburban plows through pools of water.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Rain HAMMERS on the windscreen.

Tom sees a church with a blue neon cross on its roof loom out of the rain.

LAURA
We've got to eat, Tom.

Nathan spots a gas station.

NATHAN
There.

It's closed. Ella groans with hunger pangs.

ELLA
I swear, I will never diet again.

Nathan spots a FIGURE jump into a pick-up truck in the gas station's forecourt.

NATHAN

Dad!

The pick-up truck's lights switch on and it reverses.

Tom 360s the Suburban and barrels into the gas station's forecourt, blocking the truck.

EXT. GAS STATION, FORECOURT - NIGHT

The Suburban and the pick-up both brake, headlights to headlights, inches from each other, engines growling.

Tom clambers out of the Suburban and into the rain. He runs to the truck. The truck's window unwinds, revealing a Korean guy, KIM, 30, in cowboy hat and with a pony tail.

KIM

We're kinda closed.

Tom brandishes his wallet.

TOM

I'll make it worth your while.

KIM

I don't need -

TOM

We've got no food. We haven't eaten in, I dunno, three hundred miles.

Kim studies his face for a beat, then nods.

KIM

Come on in.

Tom exhales in relief.

INT. GAS STATION STORE - NIGHT

Laura grabs ham and eggs from the refrigerator. Ella grabs soda and potato chips. Nathan grabs candy.

Tom takes a couple of bottles of wine to the cashier's counter. Kim stands behind the register.

Tom sees a wall poster with a picture of a grim Kim Il Jong, finger poised over a big red button, and the caption - "We will make you pay."

KIM

He's my uncle... Only kidding.
Korean mafia.

Tom chuckles. He spots another poster - of the towering, thundering Snake River Falls.

KIM
That's when there's no rain.

TOM
Any chance it'll let up?

KIM
Man, it ain't let up the whole spring.

Tom winces.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

The windshield wipers SLAP at the heavy rain. They all peer out at the fishing shacks which line the river. They see the river, a seething whitewater torrent.

They cruise past Joey's Whitewater Rafting.

TOM
I have always wanted to go whitewater rafting.

Ella and Laura exchange knowing glances.

ELLA & LAURA
Have fun.

TOM
You and me, Nate.

Nathan says nothing. He buries himself in his iPad. Laura reads an approaching sign.

LAURA
Brooklyn Bridge.

They cross an old and narrow wooden bridge.

TOM
Figures.

The bridge shudders and shakes as they cross.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom sees frogs hop across the road. One, two, three frogs CANNON into the windscreen, SPLATTERING blood and entrails.

ELLA & LAURA
Yick!

TOM

I had my headlights on. They should've looked before crossing the street. Right, son?

NATHAN

Yeah, kamikaze frogs. Hey, maybe they signed a suicide pact.

Tom chuckles. The wipers smear blood and bodily parts across the windshield. Laura suppresses a retch.

ELLA

That is gross.

Laura spots water, flooding through a culvert.

LAURA

Tom!

Tom hits the brakes and the Suburban SKIDS to a halt inches from the water which bars their way. Tom sees a depth indicator on the side of the road: 3 feet.

LAURA

I don't know, Tom...

Tom taps the gas pedal. The Suburban plows through the water.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

The Suburban cruises slowly.

GPS

Welcome. You have reached your destination.

Tom pulls into a driveway. A gate bars their way. The headlights pick out a house amongst the swaying trees. It's not the Bates Motel. But in the dark and the rain...

They all stare at the house - uncertain, apprehensive.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom guides the Suburban down the steep, muddy drive.

It slews and slides. Laura clutches at her seat belt. Ella suppresses a scream. Tom fights the steering wheel, but rights the Suburban.

EXT. CARPORT - NIGHT

The Suburban pulls into the carport under the pole house. Tom kills the engine.

Tom, Laura, Ella and Nathan alight and hear the BUCKETING rain and the POUNDING river. They gaze and stare in awe at the angry, raging whitewater, visible in the dark.

Ella shivers. Nathan looks nervous. Laura tightens her fleece jacket around her.

TOM
(positive spin)
Just like the website said - right
on the river.

LAURA
Tom, we're practically in the
river.

EXT. BACK DECK - NIGHT

Laura, Ella and Nathan shiver under the canvas sail/awning which covers the back deck. Tom feels under the mat for the key. Tom flips his cell open.

TOM
I'll have somebody's ass for this.
(glares at the cell)
No reception.

Laura, Ella and Nathan flip their cells. Shake their heads.

LAURA
If we have to break a window, we
gotta get in out of this.

She shivers. Nathan sees the kitchen window is open an inch.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tom climbs through the window. He overbalances on the kitchen bench. A glass vase SMASHES and Tom CRASHES to the floor.

LAURA (O.C.)
Tom? Are you all right?

Tom climbs painfully to his feet.

TOM
Yeah.

Tom gropes his way along the wall. He finds a light switch. He flicks it on. Off. On. No light.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom stumbles into the dining room. He opens the back door.

Nathan indicates to Ella - after you.

NATHAN
Age before beauty.

Ella gestures to Nathan - after you.

ELLA
Shit before the shovel.

LAURA
I heard that.

Ella, Nathan and Laura enter.

LAURA
Where's the light?

TOM
The power's not connected.

LAURA
That's because we're not supposed
to be here till tomorrow. We're
supposed to be in the hotel I
booked.

Tom nods - it's his fault.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Four cell phone screens and two iPad screens illuminate a ghostly Ella and Nathan shivering under sweaters and jackets on the sofa.

Laura stands by the fireplace and shakes a box of matches - empty. Tom enters.

LAURA
Tom, we've got to eat.

ELLA
I've got potato chips.

NATHAN
I've got some gummy bears.

LAURA
I've got breath mints.

ELLA
We could go back to that hotel.

TOM
It's two hundred miles.

An angry silence. Except for the wind and the rain. Nathan's teeth chatter.

LAURA

Have you got your inhaler?

Nathan nods. Tom glances through a window and sees a light.

EXT. CHARLIE'S SHACK - NIGHT

Tom approaches the front door. He's about to knock.

BANJO MUSIC. Tom halts. Then RAPS on the door. The banjo music stops. CHARLIE, 50, opens the door. He has a beard about to his waist. He peers suspiciously at Tom and his soaking clothes.

TOM

Hi. I'm Tom.

Charlie looks at him suspiciously. Tom sees a shotgun on the wall.

TOM

We're renting the place down the road.

CHARLIE

The Whittaker place? Fred passed a coupla months back. Didn't know it was a rental. You better come in, before you drown. Name's Charlie.

Charlie ushers Tom inside.

INT. CHARLIE'S SHACK - NIGHT

Tom rubs his hands in front of the fire. Fishing photos and mounted trophy fish line the walls. Charlie pours a couple of shots and hands one to Tom.

CHARLIE

Only way to get warm is from the inside out, right?

They down the whiskies.

TOM

That is so right.

Tom sees a bench with half-made fishing flies on it.

TOM

You make these?

CHARLIE

Oh, yeah.

TOM

Man, they are a work of art.

CHARLIE

I figure the trout know they're fakes. But they look so damn good they can't help themselves, right?
(offers whiskey bottle)
Anothereee?

TOM

I gotta get back, Charlie. My wife and kids, they're cold. They're hungry.

Charlie moves to the stove where a big pot simmers.

CHARLIE

You're in luck, sport. Most of this was headin' for the freezer. But your need is greater, my man.

TOM

Charlie, I can't take your food.

Charlie lifts the lid off a pot. Tom sniffs. And salivates.

CHARLIE

You. Me. The whole human race. We're in the shit. But we're in it together, right?

Tom grins.

EXT. CARPORT - NIGHT

Tom jumps out of the Suburban. He pauses - the river laps at his feet and the car's tires.

Something brushes his feet - two dead fish. He stares at them for a beat, then pushes them out of his mind.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom, Laura, Ella and Nathan sit on the floor around a raging log fire. They chow down on Charlie's stew. Charlie's candles and battered old fuel lanterns cast a warm glow. Tom raises his glass of wine.

TOM

To Charlie.

They all raise their glasses of wine or soda.

ALL
To Charlie.

TOM
And to a great vacation.

ALL
A great vacation.

Ella slaps at her face.

ELLA
Oww! Mosquitoes.
(slaps again)
Why do mosquitoes always head for
me?

NATHAN
Somebody's gotta find you
attractive.

Ella pokes her tongue at him. They chow down.

TOM
Damn, this is good.

LAURA
What has he put in this?

ELLA
Squirrel.

NATHAN
Possum.

TOM
Dead animals have never tasted so
good.

They all laugh. The rain BEATS down. The wind HOWLS. But Tom looks at his laughing family and smiles a happy smile.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Tom wakes - confused. He hears birds CHIRP. He sees Laura sleeping beside him, under a mix of jackets and comforters.

The overhead light comes on. Country music BURSTS from the radio alarm beside the bed.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Tom fixes a pot of coffee. Laura whisks eggs in a bowl. Tom kisses the back of her head and peers out the back window.

TOM
That is a million dollar view.

LAURA
My ass? Or the river?

TOM
Couldn't put a price on your ass,
honey.

Ella SCREAMS (O.C.)

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Tom bursts in, Laura hot on his heels. Ella stands before the mirror, her face covered in mosquito bites.

ELLA
Look!

LAURA
It's all right, honey. We'll get
some calomine lotion.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Tom and Laura exit the bathroom. Laura closes the door.

Ella SCREAMS from the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Tom and Laura burst in. Ella points at the toilet. Tom and Laura peer at a FROG in the bowl.

TOM
It's the rain. It's causing some
sort of reflux in the pipe.

ELLA
Do I gotta look for frogs every
time I want to pee?

Laura pleads at Ella with her eyes. Ella bites her tongue.

ELLA
Do something, daddy.

Tom reflexively fishes his cell from his pocket.

ELLA
Don't call someone, daddy. Do
something!

Tom flushes the toilet.

LAURA

Honey, you are so outdoors.

Tom shrugs modestly.

EXT. BACK DECK - DAY

The sun peeks through the clouds. Tom stands at the back railing with an old fishing rod. He shows Nathan how to cast.

TOM

This is how you cast, son.

Tom casts gracefully, but the line remains locked. Tom looks puzzled. Nathan unlocks the reel.

NATHAN

It's like the safety on a gun, dad.

TOM

What do you know about guns?.

Nathan shrugs and grins. Tom casts the line.

NATHAN

What would you do if you caught something?

TOM

I'd slit its guts open and rip its entrails out with my bare hands.

Nathan shudders.

TOM

You can kill, torture and mutilate. You can wipe out entire civilizations on that computer of yours, but you can't bring a little fish to your family's table, huh?

Laura and Ella - calomine splotched on her face - march in with a pan of scrambled eggs and plates of bread and ham.

LAURA

If you mighty hunters think we're going to cook this vacation, you'd better wise up.

A WHOOP, A HOLLER (O.C).

Tom and Ella look upstream. Donovan pilots a whitewater raft with six RAFTERS. The raft flies past only thirty yards from the deck.

TOM
 Check it out, Nate.
 (re rafting)
 Isn't that something?

ELLA
 (re Donovan)
 Yeah.

Donovan clocks Ella, grins and raises his paddle in salute.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

A vintage '60s Kiowa helicopter - small, light, reconnaissance - sweeps up the valley, skimming the river.

INT. KIOWA - DAY

SKIP, 50 pilots the chopper from his tiny cockpit. His sidekick GILLY, 24, Tom and Nathan perch in the cramped cabin.

SKIP
 Gilly here will call out the sights. Don't believe everything he says. Most people round here call him Gilligan.

GILLY
 Don't go listening to Skip. Most people round here call him Mary Anne.

Tom laughs. Gilly points to the raging waterfall below.

GILLY
 Snake River Falls. Wow, it's powerin'! All the rain and all the water coming off the mountains sweeps through the valley to here. Never seen it pumpin' like this.

Tom admires the raging power of the teeming falls, which CRASH into the rocks hundreds of feet below.

Nathan risks a peek, then gulps and closes his eyes.

INT. KIOWA - DAY

Snake River glides by below. Gilly points.

GILLY
 Comin' up is Twin Peaks.

Tom marvels at a pair of rugged rocks/peaks, coming up fast, and rising menacingly out of the whitewater ahead.

EXT. TWIN PEAKS - DAY

The Kiowa banks and steeples, its landing skids almost brushing the peaks. The whitewater LASHES the jagged rocks.

EXT. CHARLIE'S SHACK - DAY

Charlie sits in a rocker on his back deck, sipping coffee. He sees the Kiowa approaching, real low.

INT. KIOWA - DAY

Skip waves. Charlie's waist-long beard catches the wind.

SKIP

We got a little custom round here.
A man can't shave till he's caught
a fish.

Tom chuckles. Charlie salutes.

INT. KIOWA - DAY

The Kiowa skims along the Snake River Gorge. Then it steeples, and soars above a dam wall.

GILLY

The dam was built in 1935. The wall
is earth and rock.

TOM

Sounds kinda primitive.

Tom leans out. He gestures to Nate - lean out.

NATE

Uh-huh.

TOM

You're buckled in, son.

NATE

I'm good, dad. I'm good.

Nate draws back into his seat. He clutches his inhaler.

Gilly stares at the dam below - water laps against the top of the wall.

GILLY

Wow! You ever seen it this full,
Skip?

Skip shakes his head, awestruck.

INT. SPA - DAY

Laura lies on a massage table, under a fluffy towel. A
THERAPIST stands over her.

THERAPIST

The hot rock massage is an Ancient
Chinese Therapy.

LAURA

Great. As long as it's warm and
dry.

The Therapist places a hot rock on Laura's back.

LAURA

Oh, have they got heaven in Ancient
China?

Ella rises from a nearby chair and puts down a magazine.

ELLA

I'll see you in a while, mom, OK?

LAURA

Don't hurry, honey. No hurry at
all.

Laura groans in ecstasy.

EXT. MAIN ST, JEWELRY STALL - DAY

Ella checks out the earrings in a mirror. Donovan, the raft
guide ghosts in behind her. He sees the calomine lotion on
her face.

DONOVAN

You don't do bug repellent in LA?

ELLA

Yeah, we call it mace.

Donovan grins.

DONOVAN

I'm Donovan. How about a coffee or
juice or something?

ELLA

Coffee, juice or something? Is this the best offer I'm likely to get today? I think it probably is. I'm Ella and who says I'm from LA?

Donovan grins.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

An organic vegan cafe with decor to match. Ella and Donovan sit at a table.

DONOVAN

They've got this coffee in Bali, right? The civets, a kind of possum, eat the coffee berry, but the coffee beans stay intact and they pass through the civet.

ELLA

You mean, the civet craps them out.

DONOVAN

Yeah. So, they collect the beans and grind them. Voila, the world's most expensive coffee.

ELLA

No!

DONOVAN

True.

ELLA

You wouldn't read about it in the National Enquirer!

DONOVAN

I like talking to you.

Ella's cell CHIRPS. She hauls it out of her purse.

ELLA

Four bars! The real world at last.
(into cell)
Hi! Where have you been? Tell me all!... Define boring...

Ella looks up. Donovan has gone.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, ZIP LINE - DAY

Tom and Nathan watch a 10 year old KID laugh like crazy as he rockets across the river on a military-style zip line.

Nathan's up next. He draws back.

NATHAN
I don't want to, dad.

TOM
Of course you do.

NATHAN
You don't know what's under there.

TOM
It's just water, Nate. Get on the line.

The zip line OPERATOR looks impatiently at Nate and Tom. Nate's breath rasps.

NATHAN
I can't swim.

TOM
What happened to those swimming lessons I paid for?

The PEOPLE in line grumble.

NATHAN
I flunked.

TOM
How can anyone flunk swimming class?

Nathan's breath rasps. Tom grabs him by the arm and pushes their way through the line.

EXT. MAIN ST - DAY

Donovan marches along the sidewalk. Ella catches up.

ELLA
You got something against cell phones? How do you communicate up here? Carrier pigeon?

DONOVAN
I don't like bad manners.

Ella convulses. She slaps the side of her head. And again.

ELLA
Damn those microwaves. They're frying my brain.

Donovan grins. They reach a mint-condition 60s VW bus.

ELLA
This yours?

DONOVAN
Yep.

ELLA
You gonna ask me up to see your
Grateful Dead posters?

Donovan slides open the side door. Ella peers in at the
candles, the CD player, the posters on the wall.

DONOVAN
My mom and dad used to live in it.

ELLA
You're not getting me in there. Not
on first date. Hey, this isn't even
a date.

Donovan laughs. Ella spots a mattress and tie-dyed comforter.

ELLA
I suppose you were conceived back
there.

DONOVAN
I think I was.

ELLA
Tell me you've changed the
mattress.

An old F-150 screeches to a halt beside them. JACKSON, 21 a
feral raft guide with a skunk Mohawk and gages the size of
quarters in his earlobes is behind the wheel of the F-150.
ANGIE, 21, cute, a Rat Chick, sits beside him.

JACKSON
Want to go racin', hippie boy?

DONOVAN
Are you crazy?

A Chevy pickup pulls up behind. TRENT, 21, a rafter with
orange hair and multiple piercings, leans through the Chevy's
window. BRITT, 21, another cute Rat Chick sits beside him.

TRENT
You oughtta take up fishing, man.

JACKSON
Or golf.

DONOVAN
You want to kill yourselves? Fine.
More work for me.

JACKSON

I don't think he's a River Rat. I
think he's a -

Trent cackles like a chicken. Donovan grits his teeth.

EXT. HILL ST - DAY

The residential quiet shatters when a convoy of the F-150, the Chevy pick-up and a battered Hi-Lux SCREAMS around the corner.

Angie drives and Ella rides shotgun in Jackson's F-150. Jackson and Donovan stand on the back. The 150 SCREECHES to a halt in front of a neat house. Donovan and Jackson haul an empty bright green trash can onto the back of the truck.

Britt drives and CAROL rides shotgun in the Chevy. Trent and MIKEY stand on the back. Britt SLAMS the brakes in front of a tidy house. Trent and Mikey heave a trash can onto the back.

JANEY, 19 drives and ROMY, 18, rides shotgun in the Hi-Lux. MARIO, 20 and PAUL, 21 stand in the back. The Hi-Lux brakes in a cloud of burning rubber and Mario and Paul haul a trash can into the truck.

An irate HOMEOWNER bursts out of his front door.

HOMEOWNER

Goddam kids! Bring that trash can
back!

The convoy ROARS off.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

The trash cans bob in the shallows. And Donovan, Jackson, Trent, Mikey, Paul and Mario bob in the trash cans.

Ella, Britt, Janey, Romy and Carol sit on the gunwales of a raft, and watch and root.

Angie stands in the shallows. She holds aloft a flag, bearing a cartoon of a stoned river rat on a raft.

ANGIE

Gentleman. Start your engines.

She twirls the flag like a grand prix marshall. Go!

Donovan, Jackson and the others paddle furiously into the current. The current catches them and sweeps them downriver.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

Jackson balances his trash can in the swirling rapids. Donovan paddles a couple of yards behind.

Mario and Paul CRASH. Paul overbalances and his trash can topples. The whitewater tosses the trash can downstream.

EXT. RIVER RAFT - DAY

Angie, Ella, Britt and the Rat Chicks paddle behind the trash cans. They watch the five guys, fighting the whitewater.

ANGIE

Way to go, Jackson!

BRITT

Whoa, Trent!

ELLA

Guess I'll root for Donovan. Go, Donovan!

Angie holds out her paddle for Paul, who grabs it. Britt and Janey haul him into the raft.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

Jackson paddles hard. He's a yard in front of Donovan, who paddles smoothly.

Jackson spots a submerged tree. He angles his paddle like a rudder and the trash can bobbles around it.

Donovan spots it. He back paddles, losing ten yards, but bobs around it.

DONOVAN

Tree!!

Mikey, twenty yards behind hears him. He spots the tree. Too late. The tree CLIPS the trash can's wheels, upending it. Mikey cartwheels through the air. He SMACKS the water.

EXT. RIVER RAFT - DAY

Ella and the girls drum their hands on the side of the raft, rooting, whooping, hollering.

Carol holds out her paddle for Mikey.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

Jackson paddles furiously. Donovan paddles fluidly, a couple of yards behind.

Jackson spots rocks ahead - sharp, wicked.

Jackson battles the churning whitewater with his paddle and barrels past them. Donovan paddles in his wake.

JACKSON
(to Donovan)
I own you, boy.

Mario - twenty yards behind - spots the rocks. He back paddles furiously. His trash can wobbles. The whitewater sucks at the trash can.

The trash can CANNONS into the rock. Mario catapults through the air and SMACKS into the water. Mario surfaces and watches the trash can SMASH into a rock and RICOCHET.

EXT. RIVER RAFT - DAY

Ella watches, stunned as the trash can BOUNCES from rock to rock and SPLINTERS.

ANGIE
It ain't for pussies out there.

Ella nods shakily.

ANGIE
This next stretch is called The Highway.

BRITT
The Highway to Hell.

Angie points to the Hellhole 200 yards downstream.

ANGIE
That's the Hellhole.

ELLA
Dangerous?

Angie and Britt cross themselves - only half-jokingly.

BRITT
There are bodies down there.

Ella gulps.

ANGIE
(points)
Finish line is that little beach just this side of Hellhole.

BRITT
You do not want to overshoot that beach.

ANGIE
Not in a trash can.

Ella stares at the roiling, angry Hellhole.

ELLA
What does the winner get?

ANGIE
If Jackson wins, I'll think of something nice.

BRITT
Hey, if he loses he'll still get something nice.

Ella grins. Britt spots Mikey's empty can bounce off a wave.

BRITT
Trent!! Rogue!!

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

Mikey's rogue trash can bounces off another wave and SMASHES into Trent's trash can. Trent battles the current and struggles to balance. He topples and his trash can capsizes.

EXT. RIVER RAFT - DAY

Britt groans.

BRITT
Oh, baby. I still love ya.

She holds out her paddle and Trent grabs it. She hauls him in and they kiss as he topples into the raft.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

Jackson scans the water for the right line. He paddles into a current and accelerates.

Donovan - a couple of yards behind - studies the waters. He sees Jackson getting away. But he waits. He spots clean water. Paddles up on the outside.

The current snatches him and he whips by Jackson.

DONOVAN
When you gonna learn to read the water, boy? Maybe you need a seeing eye dog.

Jackson swipes at Donovan's can with his paddle.

EXT. RIVER RAFT - DAY

Ella sees Jackson swipe Donovan's can again. Donovan's trash can teeters.

ELLA
Hey, that's cheating.

ANGIE
Starboard vessel has right of way.
And has the right to defend that
way. The Rule of the Waves.

Donovan battles to steady his wobbling trash can.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

Donovan and Jackson duel and joust, thrust and parry with their paddles.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, SHALLOWS - DAY

Nathan's arms flail in an untidy crawl. Tom swims beside him.

TOM
You're doing good, Nate. Five
yards.

Nathan and Tom touch their beached canoe, catch their breath.

TOM
Good job... The doctor says the
asthma is psychosomatic. You know
what that means?

NATHAN
I should see a psychiatrist.

TOM
No! It means you'll grow out of it.

They hear CHEERING and ROOTING (O.C).

Tom and Nathan gape at the trash cans and the duelling Donovan and Jackson.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

Jackson thrusts. Donovan parries. And the whitewater drags the trash cans toward Hellhole.

EXT. RIVER RAFT - DAY

Angie and Britt spot Hellhole ahead.

ANGIE
Jackson!!

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

Donovan and Jackson lock paddles. They both see Hellhole. They thrust, parry, lock.

Donovan feints and thrusts and pushes Jackson off. The whitewater tugs at his trash can.

Hellhole SUCKS Donovan in. He paddles mightily and breaks free of the ripping current. He paddles toward the beach/finish line. Jackson paddles furiously beside him.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Donovan scrapes the sand inches in front of Jackson. Donovan raises his paddle triumphantly. Jackson touches paddles with Donovan to salute the victor.

Angie races into the water. Jackson stands in his trash can and takes Angie in his arms. They kiss passionately.

Ella approaches Donovan. Ella and Donovan check out Jackson and Angie - still kissing. Ella offers Donovan her hand. He kisses it gallantly.

Trent and Mikey jump into the water and upend Donovan's trash can. He pulls Ella down with him. She shrieks and surfaces, soaking wet.

Ella rises and sees a furious Tom standing in the shallows.

TOM
What the hell?

ELLA
Hi. Er, Daddy this is Donovan.
Donovan, my father.

DONOVAN
How do you do, sir.

Tom glares at the feral Jackson, Trent and the others.

JACKSON
We'll get these trash cans back.

Jackson and the others nod at Donovan and quickly leave.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A furious Tom and Nathan stand before Ella and Donovan.

TOM
Is it legal?

DONOVAN
Um, well, I don't know of any
statute -

In b/g Jackson and the River Rats and Chicks pack the trash
cans onto the trucks by the road.

ELLA
Daddy, it was just a little fun.
Hey, we're supposed to be getting
out on the river.

TOM
In a trash can?

A MALE and a FEMALE KAYAKER, in full helmets and life jackets
paddle in a two man kayak into the white water behind them.

ELLA
You said to enjoy the vacation.

TOM
I didn't say kill yourself.

DONOVAN
I would not have put her in any
danger, sir.

TOM
(clocks the kayakers)
Did she have a helmet? A life
jacket?

Donovan spots the Kayakers. He sees the current tug them
toward Hellhole.

DONOVAN
Right channel! Right channel!!

Nathan watches the kayakers fearfully.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

The Male and Female Kayakers battle against the current. The
kayak catches in submerged rocks.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Donovan, Tom, Nathan and Ella see the Kayakers battle to
break free.

DONOVAN
Holy shit.

TOM
I got a canoe.

Tom and Donovan sprint to the canoe and launch it.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

The Kayakers push off the rock. They CRASH into another rock. The kayak overturns and the two Kayakers hit the water.

CUT TO:

Tom and Donovan paddle the canoe furiously.

CUT TO:

The Kayakers battle the current, but are swept away.

BACK TO:

Donovan - really worried.

CUT TO:

The Male Kayaker sees the violent, swirling eddy of Hellhole. He flails frantically against the current.

The kayak is sucked into Hellhole. It 360s. Then SNAPS in half. One half cartwheels through the air.

The other half disappears.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Jackson, the River Rats and Chicks rush to Ella and Nathan who watch in horror.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

Donovan holds out his paddle and the Female Kayaker grabs it. Tom hauls her into the canoe.

CUT TO:

The Male Kayaker sees Hellhole twenty yards away and his face contorts in fear. He grabs at a rock. Holds. Then loses his grip. The vicious current drags him toward Hellhole.

Donovan and Tom pump their paddles. Donovan struggles to keep the canoe from Hellhole. Tom holds out his paddle. The Male Kayaker reaches for it. Grabs it. Tom heaves.

The Male Kayaker loses his grip. He SHRIEKS as Hellhole sucks him in. He 360s in the whirlpool. And disappears.

CUT TO:

The Female Kayaker SCREAMS.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Ella puts her arm protectively around Nathan's shoulders.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

Tom and Donovan paddle desperately against the current. The whitewater tugs the canoe, dragging it toward Hellhole.

Donovan spots a gap in the whitewater, paddles and the canoe shoots into calmer water.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER ROAD - DAY

The Sheriff's car and an ambulance are parked on the road by the beach, flashers swirling.

A PARAMEDIC hands water and a sedative to the Female Kayaker who sits in the back of the ambulance, a blanket wrapped around her.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

Roy the Sheriff, a DEPUTY, Tom and Nathan, Ella and Donovan, Jackson, and the River Rats and Girls spread out, peering into the water.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - DAY

Two DEPUTIES in a boat haul in a drag net. It's empty.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, RIVER BANK - DAY

Ella sees something underwater.

ELLA

Donovan?

It's a body.

TIME CUT TO:

Ella and Donovan watch the Sheriff and Deputy haul the Male Kayaker from the river. His face is bloodied and battered to pulp. One arm and a leg are bloody stumps.

Ella turns away. Tom turns Nathan's head away and squeezes his shoulder. Tom sees Donovan put his arm around Ella and she buries her face in his chest.

The sky clouds over. Thunder CLAPS.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Tom and Nathan, Ella and Donovan stand awkwardly in the rain.

TOM
(suddenly remembers)
Laura? Where is she, Ella?

ELLA
I don't know.

TOM
Oh, boy. We better go find her.

DONOVAN
I can take Ella home, sir.

Tom sees how shattered Ella is. He nods.

INT. SUBURBAN - DAY

The rain pours down. Tom and Laura leap into the car.

LAURA
Well, I've had shiatsu and reiki.
I've had hot rocks and cold
compresses and a full body massage.
I've had irrigation. Do you know
where they put those rubber hoses?
What have you boys been up to?

NATHAN
We saw a dead body, mom.

LAURA
A real live dead body, huh?

NATHAN
A dead body can't be live, mom.

Laura looks quizzically at Tom.

INT. VW BUS - DAY

Donovan drives along the High Road, which winds above Snake River. Ella sits beside him, gazing at the swollen river below.

ELLA
Is it always so angry?

DONOVAN
I've never seen it like this.

Donovan sees the tears well in her eyes.

DONOVAN
Are you all right?

ELLA
I've never seen someone die before.

DONOVAN
It's not much fun.

ELLA
Have you seen a dead body?

DONOVAN
(changes the subject)
There's my house. Just up here.

ELLA
Can I see it?

Donovan swings the VW into a driveway.

EXT. DONOVAN'S FRONT YARD - DAY

Ella and Donovan stand in the front yard which has sweeping views of Snake River and Snake River Gorge.

DONOVAN
That's your house down there.
You're on the low side. We're on
the high side.

Ella turns and looks at the rustic, timber house.

ELLA
It's a beautiful house.

DONOVAN
My dad built it. He was a rafter.
They say he could ride that river
on a skateboard.

ELLA
Was?

DONOVAN
He went out solo one day, after the
rain. It was running a little
faster than he thought. Hellhole.

ELLA

Oh, Donovan. You saw him.

DONOVAN

He always said, "you go with the river. Go with the flow. Never take it on, 'cause you can't win". Of course he never practised what he preached.

ELLA

I'm so sorry.

Donovan points to a veg garden.

DONOVAN

Mom grows her veg. And herbs. And pot.

ELLA

What is your mom? A basket weaver? An abstract expressionist potter?

DONOVAN

She's the mayor.

Ella reacts - are you serious?

INT. CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Annie stands at the window and stares at the gathering clouds.

ANNIE

I'm closing the river.

Joey and Russ, Roy and Warren sit at the conference table.

RUSS

Jesus, mayor, it's not even raining.

JOEY

They were amateurs, Annie. Shouldn'ta been on the river.

RUSS

These are people's livelihoods you're messing with.

ANNIE

The river is at record levels. And there's a storm on the way. One thing I won't mess with, is people's lives.

Annie moves to a giant ordnance map on the wall.

ANNIE

Roy, I want Emergency and Volunteer Services alerted. Issue all the warnings and set up evacuation procedures and protocols.

Roy nods.

INT. VW BUS - EVENING

Rain hammers on the roof. The wipers slap across the windshield. Donovan drives, Ella beside him.

ELLA

How do I get across the river? Swim? Or are you gonna part the waters?

DONOVAN

They say these old buses can float. But, I've never put it to the test.

Donovan pulls in at the ferry stop. Ella sees an old corrugated iron shed and an ancient ferry at the river bank.

EXT. FERRY - EVENING

Donovan drives the bus onto the old rustbucket of a ferry. He climbs out. He opens the control box and hits the button.

Machinery CLANKS. A steel cable tautens on a pulley wheel. The ferry crawls into the water, guided by steel cables.

INT. VW BUS - EVENING

The VW rocks and rolls on the ferry in mid-river.

Whitewater and waves CRASH onto the ferry. Ella jumps. Donovan clasps her hand.

ELLA

Jeez. Why am I thinking Titanic here?

DONOVAN

It's safe. It's been here since Roosevelt was president.

ELLA

Yeah, and isn't Roosevelt dead?

The ferry bucks and dips in the water like a bronco.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Tom peers anxiously out the front window.

TOM

It's getting late. She should be
back by now.

Laura joins him and they stare into the dark. They see
headlights approach, swing in, and down the steep driveway.
Laura clocks the vintage VW bus and blinks.

LAURA

Who is this guy? Cheech or Chong?

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Ella sits on the sofa beside Donovan. Nathan shows Donovan
his iPad.

DONOVAN

Floodmaster. Awesome.

Laura sits in an armchair opposite.

LAURA

I hear you were pretty amazing out
on that river today, Donovan.

DONOVAN

Mr Fisher did a great job.

Laura glances at Tom who struggles to get a log fire going.
He swipes at the plumes of smoke.

LAURA

Oh, he's the last of the
frontiersman.

Tom coughs and splutters with smoke inhalation.

LAURA

Can I get you some more soda? Or
corn chips? They're organic.

DONOVAN

No, thank you. I really have to get
going. I'm on kitchen duty. My mom -

ELLA

The mayor.

DONOVAN

- is kinda tied up. She's closed
the river and there's a storm
coming.

ELLA
Donovan's invited me to his house
for dinner -

TOM
Wait on.

ELLA
- and a party afterwards.

TOM
This is the first real night of our
vacation. And we're gonna have it
together.

ELLA
Daddy! It's my vacation too.

DONOVAN
It's all right. Those guys party
every night.

TOM
You think I'm gonna let you out
with a storm coming?

ELLA
I'll take an umbrella!

DONOVAN
Maybe you could all come over?
Tomorrow night?

LAURA
That would be lovely. Thank you.

Ella and Tom stare daggers at each other.

EXT. CARPORT - EVENING

Ella stands by the bus. Donovan seals an envelope and hands
it to her.

DONOVAN
Open this at nine o'clock tonight.
Not before.

He kisses her on the lips and climbs back in the bus.

EXT. BACK DECK - NIGHT

Tom takes the last T-bone from the barbeque, and piles it on
a plate which Nathan holds up for him. They head for the back
deck table where Laura sits with Ella.

TOM

This is what it's about. Families
getting back to their roots.

The canvas sail goes limp. Then the breeze snaps it in the
opposite direction.

LAURA

Honey, our roots are in
Bakersfield.

Laura hands a salad bowl to Ella who looks pensive.

LAURA

Are you all right, Ella?

ELLA

Yeah.

LAURA

It must have been awful out there
today. You've all been incredibly
brave. Especially, my man here.

Laura musses Nathan's hair affectionately.

NATHAN

Donovan took her in his manly
rafter's arms and consoled her.

Ella cuffs him behind the ear. Then she slaps her own face.

ELLA

Oww! Mosquitoes.

Tom rises and goes to the electric zapper on the wall. The
zapper glows blue.

INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Annie opens a bottle of wine at the kitchen bench.

ANNIE

What on earth were you thinking,
going out on the river in trash
cans?

Donovan stirs a pot on the stove.

DONOVAN

Hmm, maybe a pinch of nutmeg.

ANNIE

Don't change the subject, Donovan.
You could have killed yourselves.

Donovan looks suitably guilty but adds the nutmeg.

ANNIE

Roy said you saved the girl.

DONOVAN

Potatoes?

ANNIE

Just like your father. Brave.
Smart. And incredibly stupid.

EXT. BACK DECK - NIGHT

Tom, Laura, Ella and Nathan eat dinner.

LAURA

He seems like a very nice young
man.

NATHAN

He'll look sooo good on your
screensaver.

ZZZZ. A bug hits the zapper. And another.

TOM

I just want you to realize, Ella,
he is only a river guide.

ELLA

So?

TOM

He works for tips. Nickels and
dimes.

LAURA

Leave it, Tom. We're on vacation.

ELLA

He's a professional guide!

TOM

It's brutal out there. And I'm not
talking about the river.

ZZZZ. Another bug hits the zapper. And another.

ELLA

Why are my boyfriends never good
enough for you?

TOM

I will not have my daughter going
out with a guy who works for spare
change.

ZZZZZ. The bug zapper goes into overdrive. It flashes and crackles like the 4th July. They all look at the zapper - what the???.

The rain starts to pour. Then even heavier. It BEATS a TATTOO on the canvas sail. The wind HOWLS.

CRACK! The wind rips the canvas sail from its tethers. A rope snaps and whiplashes Tom on his cheekbone. He grabs his bloodied cheek. The rain SHEETS down. They race for the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Laura dabs Tom's cheekbone with antiseptic. They sit in front of the crackling fire.

LAURA

It really needs a couple of stitches.

TOM

Just a flesh wound.

LAURA

Yeah, well, your son and your daughter are bleeding a bit today. And you're not helping.

Tom nods - you're right. The wind howls. The rain BEATS on the roof and window.

INT. ELLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ella looks at the time on her cell phone. It ticks over to 9.00pm. She opens Donovan's envelope.

ELLA

(reads aloud)

Look out your window.

Ella looks out the window. Darkness. Rain. She frowns.

INT. DONOVAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Donovan enters. He sees the Fishers' lights across the river. He switches on his light.

INT. ELLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ella sees the bedroom light across the river. She reads Donovan's letter.

ELLA

But soft! What light through yonder
window breaks? It is the East, and
she is the sun! Arise, fair sun,
and kill the envious moon, Who is
already sick and pale with grief.
This bud of love, by summer's
ripening breath, may prove a
beauteous flower when next we meet.

The light glows across the river.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ella smiles goofily. She's almost walking on air. Nathan
opens the bathroom door and looks at her - scared.

NATHAN

Ella?

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ella and Nathan peer into the toilet bowl. It's packed with
heaving squirming frogs.

ELLA

They're just trying to get out of
the rain, Nate.

Nathan is not convinced.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ella and Laura sit before the log fire. In b/g Nathan and Tom
play checkers. Laura reads Donovan's letter.

LAURA

Wow. That's beautiful. But, honey,
we live eight hundred miles away.
Long distance romances never last.

ELLA

The rafting's a summer job. He's
pre-med at UCLA.

LAURA

Oh. Your father will be pleased.

DRIP. A drop of water SPLASHES in Laura's wineglass.

Nathan takes one of Tom's checkers.

NATHAN

But why, dad?

TOM

I don't know, Nathan. I'm not a plumber.

NATHAN

Frogs can't survive in toilets, dad. It's not natural.

DRIP. Laura sees another drop of water SPLASH in her wineglass.

DRIP. DRIP. DRIP. A bowl sits on the floor collecting the first leak from the ceiling. Laura places another bowl on the floor collecting the second leak. DRIP.

INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom opens a bottle of wine and frowns out the window at the churning river. Nathan joins him.

NATHAN

The water's coming up, isn't, dad?

TOM

(convincing himself)
It's nothing to worry about, son.

Nathan's breath rasps.

TOM

Where's your inhaler?

INT. STATE METEOROLOGY DEPARTMENT, SNAKE RIVER RELAY - NIGHT

Ned takes a man-size bite of his bear claw donut. He looks at his computer screen and stops chewing. He scratches himself nervously and reaches for the phone.

INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Annie is on the phone. She listens and frowns.

INT. SNAKE RIVER DAM, OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

Harvey, phone to ear, monitors his dials and gauges, which hover and flicker menacingly in Red Zones.

HARVEY

I'm ordering a release, Annie.

INT. CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBER - NIGHT

Annie, Roy the Sheriff and Warren the Town Engineer sit at the conference table.

ANNIE

We need some time, Harvey. We've gotta warn folks.

HARVEY

(on speaker phone)
I'll give you an hour.

ANNIE

OK, Harvey.

Annie hangs up.

ANNIE

OK, gentlemen. Bulletins to go out on radio. Local TV. Internet.

WARREN

I'll alert the hospital. And set up an evacuation meet at the school.

SHERIFF

All my men are standing by.
Volunteer Emergency's assembled.

ANNIE

We'll need volunteers to work the phones.

Roy nods grimly. Annie looks at the wall clock: 10pm.

EXT. DAM WALL - NIGHT

Rain lashes the dam. Waves pound the wall.

EXT. SPILLWAY - NIGHT

A torrent of water overflows the spillway.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom takes the last log from the wood basket and throws it on the fire. Laura sits on the sofa, her arm around Nathan, who takes a hit of his inhaler.

Ella empties a bowl of water into a bucket. Something catches her eye through the window and she stifles a SCREAM.

A dozen eyes stare through the window at them. Tom moves to the window and sees raccoons.

TOM
It's only raccoons. Looking for
higher ground.

Tom picks up the empty wood basket.

INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom opens the back door. Laura joins him.

LAURA
Tom, should we be worried?

TOM
No. A little wind. A little rain.
You used to love the sound of rain
on the roof.

He wraps his free arm around her and kisses her.

LAURA
Nathan's not feeling well.

TOM
You're the one who said it's
psychosomatic.

LAURA
He's scared, Tom. Hell, I'm scared.

Tom looks torn.

EXT. CARPORT - NIGHT

Tom shines his flashlight on the raging river. It's getting
closer - ankle deep on the driveway.

He shines the flashlight around and sees a set of animal
eyes. And another. He swallows his fear as the raccoons
approach. They growl at him, stand on their rear legs. Then
scamper up a tree. Tom exhales in relief.

He moves to the woodpile. He picks up a cut log and tosses it
in the basket. He picks up another.

HISS.

A rattle snake slithers from the woodpile and raises itself,
fangs bared, hissing. Tom recoils and drops the wood.

A Second Rattler uncoils and raises itself hissing, spitting.
Tom backs off. Both rattlers advance.

Tom is pinned against the wall. He hurls the flashlight at
the rattlers. It misses, bounces off the concrete floor and
ricochets into the river.

Darkness.

HISS. RATTLE. HISS. RATTLE.

Tom tries to swallow his fear. His eyes adjust to the dark and he sees the rattlers slither away.

Tom sees a flashlight beam approaching down the side of the house. Charlie appears in waterproofs.

CHARLIE

Howdy, sport.

TOM

Hey, Charlie. Watch out for rattlers.

CHARLIE

I got 'em over my place too.
Looking for dry land.

A pair of fish wash into Tom's calves.

TOM

Charlie, what are these dead fish?

Charlie picks up a fish and studies it.

CHARLIE

It's all the dirt and silt comin'
off the mountains. Gets in their
gills. They suffocate.

Laura appears at the bottom of the stairs.

LAURA

Are you telling us the fish can't
live in this?

CHARLIE

Happens every time we get a flood,
ma'am.

TOM

See, honey, there's nothing to
worry about.

CHARLIE

I know you ain't got a phone, so
just to let you know - they're
gonna release up at the dam.

LAURA

You mean, more water?

CHARLIE

Damn fools. Think they can control this. Should never have built a dam in the first place.

LAURA

Should we think about leaving?

CHARLIE

Wll, they say they're only releasing ten per cent volume. Relieve the pressure. You're up on poles. You got twenty feet on me, and I've survived every damn flood for fifty years.

Tom looks relieved. But Laura looks unconvinced.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The rain beats on the roof. Water drips from the ceiling into three separate bowls.

A pale Nathan sits on the floor beside Tom, wrapped in a blanket, toasting marshmallows on the fire.

Laura sits, and Ella lays on the sofa.

LAURA

Don't burn them, Nathan.

Nathan keeps toasting.

BANG. A tree hits the outside wall. Ella jumps.

LAURA

I think they're done, honey.

The marshmallows burst into flames. Nathan pulls the toasting fork from the flames and blows on the marshmallows.

LAURA

I said they were done!

NATHAN

I like 'em like that.

Tom looks worriedly at Laura. She forces an apologetic smile. Nathan rises and takes the marshmallows to Laura.

LAURA

Thank you, honey. They're beautiful.

A GRINDING GROANING WRENCHING from outside. BANG. SMASH.

A huge tree branch CRASHES through the side window and wall. Tom wraps himself around Nathan. The giant branch quivers, inches from his face.

TOM
Everyone all right?

ELLA
Daddy!

A fuel lamp SMASHES on the floor. Fire spreads across the rug. Tom leaps to his feet and stamps on the rug. He rips a wet curtain off the window and douses the flames.

Wind and rain pour through the smashed window. Smoke billows off the burned rug.

LAURA
Why did you bring us to this
godforsaken place?!

TOM
I -

LAURA
What is wrong with a hotel, and a
pool and room service? You say "We
don't communicate any more." We're
just a normal family!

Tom takes her in his arms and stares at the branch in their living room. The rain pours in through the broken window.

EXT. CARPORT - NIGHT

Laura and Ella wade through the calf-deep water to the Suburban.

Tom carries a pale Nathan in a blanket. Laura opens the back door and Tom puts Nathan on the back seat.

TOM
Soon have you in a nice warm hotel.

Nathan forces a smile and Tom shuts the door.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

The Suburban eases up the driveway. It slips backwards.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom gives it a little gas.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

The wheels spin, churning mud, digging holes for themselves.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom lifts his foot off the gas. He eases the Suburban back a body length. He swings the wheel and takes a new line.

The Suburban slips and slides and fishtails then lurches onto the road.

TOM

Whoa. That was fun.

ELLA

Barrel of laughs, dad.

TOM

You all right, buddy?

A pale Nathan nods.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SIDE - NIGHT

Water cascades down the mountainside.

EXT. WATERFALL - NIGHT

Water hurls itself over the mountainside.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

Water funnels into a violent, raging whitewater.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Anxious silence as Tom drives.

ELLA

We are coming back?

LAURA

Honey, there's a redwood in the living room. A wall is practically demolished.

TOM

(grins at Ella)

You really want to come back?

The road dips and the headlights illuminate shimmering water across the road ahead.

LAURA

Jesus.

Tom slows down.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER ROAD - NIGHT

The Suburban hits the water. It's two feet deep. The Suburban plows through.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom hunches over the wheel, eyes scanning the watery road.

ELLA

Can we have some music or something?

Tom looks at her in his rear view mirror.

TOM

Honey, I'm trying to concentrate. It's only a mile to the bridge.

LAURA

Tom!!

Tom sees the culvert, brimming with churning water. He slams on the brakes.

EXT. CULVERT - NIGHT

Water swirls and races through the culvert.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom stares at the swirling currents. He looks at the depth indicator at the side of the road: four feet.

ELLA

You can't go through that, dad.

LAURA

Yes you can.

Tom looks to Laura. She gestures - your call. Tom squeezes the gas pedal.

EXT. CULVERT - NIGHT

The Suburban crawls through the water. It's up to its hubcaps. Its running board. Half way up the doors and body.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

The water SLAMS into the Suburban, shaking and rattling the Suburban. BANG! A rock hits Ella's door. She jumps in fright. The engine coughs and splutters.

All look anxiously at Tom. A touch more gas. The Suburban lurches out of the culvert.

ELLA

Yo, dad.

Laura squeezes Tom's leg.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

Water pours into the river from the mountains. It hurtles along the valley.

A giant redwood teeters into the racing water. CRACK! It uproots.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER ROAD - NIGHT

The Suburban chugs through the water-covered road.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom whiteknuckles the steering wheel.

LAURA

How far to the bridge?

TOM

Just round the bend.

LAURA

(to Nathan)

Nearly there, honey.

Nathan nods gratefully. The Suburban rounds the bend.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - NIGHT

The bridge shudders in the wind and rain.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom and Laura see the bridge and exchange thankful looks.

They approach the bridge - 200 yards... 100 yards.

Laura glances up river. Her eyes widen.

Tom looks up river. He sees the giant, uprooted redwood barreling towards the bridge.

Tom hits the gas pedal.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The redwood hurtles toward the bridge: 100 yards.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER ROAD - NIGHT

The Suburban races toward the bridge: 90 yards...

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

... the redwood, 30 yards...

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

... 20 yards...

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - NIGHT

The redwood SMASHES into the bridge like a giant battering ram. The bridge buckles then rips apart.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom slams on the brakes. He skids onto the edge of the smashed bridge.

They all watch the torn and shattered bridge sweep away in the torrent.

The bridge sinks beneath them. Tom hits reverse - fast! Stops. The Suburban rocks and rolls in the wash of the wave.

Silence. Except for rain falling on the Suburban's roof and the slap of wipers.

ELLA

Daddy. The ferry.

TOM

Good call.

Laura nods with relief. She reaches over and squeezes Nathan's hand. His breath rasps.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom carefully pilots the Suburban back along the watery road. BANG! The Suburban hits a submerged rock. Tom rides over it.

The rain sheets down. The wipers can't keep up. Tom peers through the window and sees the abandoned fishing shacks.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, FISHING SHACK - NIGHT

The wind and the river TEAR at a boat and a jet ski tethered to a jetty. A wave hits the jetty. The jetty folds. The tether snaps.

The boat and the jet ski rocket along the river. The boat SMASHES into a fishing shack and SHATTERS.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom peers through the sheeting rain.

LAURA

Look out!

The jet ski hurtles towards them from out of the river. It SMASHES into the Suburban and bounces off.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER ROAD - NIGHT

The Suburban swerves. It sags as one wheel slides on the soft shoulder. The car slides, the water SUCKS it into the river.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom wrenches the wheel and the Suburban fishtails back on the watery road. Tom hits the brakes.

TOM

Everyone OK?

They all nod shakily.

EXT. CITY HALL - NIGHT

Water laps over the kerbs and up against City Hall. The wind tears at the power poles and the street lights.

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Clock ticks down to the hour - 11 pm. Annie nods at Warren.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The giant blue cross dies.

EXT. MAIN ST - NIGHT

The tavern plunges into darkness. The cinema's lights go out. All of Main St - blackness.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER VALLEY - NIGHT

The valley plunges into darkness.

EXT. RIVER BANK, FERRY - NIGHT

The Suburban pulls up and Tom jumps out, into the teeming rain. He wrenches open the operating box on the pole. He flicks the switch.

Tom looks across the river. The cables swing in the wind. The ferry rocks and reels in the seething torrent. But the ferry stays put.

Tom flicks the switch. Off. On. Off. On.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom climbs in, dripping water. He looks at Laura and shakes his head.

EXT. MAIN ST - NIGHT

Flood waters cascade along Main St. They smash a couple of Harley Davidsons and knock them over.

The flood waters hit a parked car and it flips over and smashes into a shop window.

INT. JACKSON'S CABIN - NIGHT

Punk/surf music plays LOUD. The River Rats are in party mode.

Jackson "surfs" an old office chair, hanging five, hanging ten.

Angie and Britt gyrate on a table like '60s go-go dancers.

Trent and Mikey push Jackson's chair and it barrels across the wood floor, Jackson hot doggin' all the way.

Donovan stands by a window, frowning at the teeming rain. He feels his cell phone vibrate, fishes it out of his pocket and answers it. He listens. His eyes locks with Jackson's.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

The Suburban stops half way down the steep driveway.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

All four stare ahead. The water covers the carport floor.

EXT. CARPORT, BACK STAIRS - NIGHT

Laura, Ella, and Tom, piggybacking Nathan, wade through three feet of water. Tom pauses. The river rages furiously only a couple of yards away.

Laura SCREAMS. A pack of WATER RATS scurry out of the water and up the stairs.

Tom stumbles and drops Nathan, who SHRIEKS. Nathan strikes out blindly in an ugly freestyle. Heading into the river.

TOM

Nathan!

Tom dives in and grabs him. The current tugs at Nathan.

Tom hauls him back and sweeps him into his arms. Tom staggers back toward the back stairs. He clammers onto the steps.

EXT. BACK DECK - NIGHT

Laura and Ella reach the deck. They freeze.

Hundreds of WATER RATS scamper around the deck. Laura pushes Ella and Nathan behind her.

Tom grabs a broom and swipes at the rats. He clears a path to the door. Laura ushers Ella and Nathan inside.

INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom jumps inside and slams the door behind him. They're all breathing heavily.

Laura reaches for the light switch. Flicks it on. No lights. Ella looks down and sees her feet are in water.

ELLA

Mom? Dad?

Tom sees water trickling under the living room door. He moves to the door.

LAURA

No, Tom.

He opens it. Water gushes in. Tom pushes the door, but the water blocks it. Nathan rushes to the door and helps him. They heave and force it shut.

They all stare at each other, ankle deep in water.

INT. SNAKE RIVER DAM, OPERATIONS CENTER - NIGHT

Warren monitors the gauges. He presses a button on the old control panel.

INT. SNAKE RIVER DAM, ENGINE ROOM - NIGHT

Hydraulics compress. Flywheels turn and pulleys strain.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER DAM WALL, UNDERWATER - NIGHT

The flood gates open and water pours through.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER VALLEY, UPSTREAM - NIGHT

A violent torrent of water gushes down the valley. It builds and swells into a wall of water.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER GORGE - NIGHT

A wall of water CRASHES through the gorge.

INT. CHARLIE'S SHACK - NIGHT

Charlie plays his banjo. He hears a low RUMBLE.

EXT. CHARLIE'S DECK - NIGHT

Charlie moves onto his deck, still wearing his banjo.

He peers through the rain, up the valley and sees the wall of raging whitewater bearing down on him.

CHARLIE

I'll be damned.

He starts playing that banjo: one, two three -

The wall of water slams into Charlie and the deck.

The shack SMASHES to pieces. Debris flies through the air.

The wall of water picks up Charlie's pick-up and tosses it against the wall of the canyon.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom mops water off the floor. Ella And Nathan soak up water with towels. Laura wrings a towel of water into the sink.

They all hear the BANG and ROAR. Tom moves to the window.

The wave surges by at deck height.

Charlie's smashed pick-up RIPS the end of the deck clear off the house.

The wash from the wave crashes against the house. The house shudders. Glasses, dishes, pots SMASH on the floor. A microwave crashes to the floor.

The river billows past only inches away.

The house settles. The waters subside.

TOM

That was the release from the dam.
Hey, it's all good now.

Laura, Ella and Nathan look desperate to believe him. Tom looks desperate to believe himself.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, TOWN RIVERBANK - NIGHT

Still the rain pours down.

Carl and Jimbo sit on their idling jet skis. They see the giant wave swelling toward them. They grin and rev their jet skis.

They catch the wave and surf along the River Road.

EXT. MAIN ST - NIGHT

Carl and Jimbo surf the wave along Main St, whooping and hollering.

The wave of water swamps parked cars and shop fronts.

EXT. LOW-LYING RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Donovan guides an aluminum dinghy in three foot waters. Jackson swings a searchlight left and right. Water laps at the front doors of the residences.

Candles glow in windows. A resident, MR CLARK, 60 stands ankle deep in water on his front porch.

DONOVAN

How you doin', Mr Clark?

HOWARD

I guess it's a raincheck on the golf tomorrow. But it'll take more than a little rain to get me out of here.

Donovan grins.

EXT. BACK DECK - NIGHT

Tom moves onto the jagged, ripped planks - all that is left of the deck. The water recedes beneath him. He breathes a sigh of relief.

The deck heaves and sags.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A support pole bends dangerously. It twists and buckles.

EXT. BACK DECK - NIGHT

Tom slips. He slides to the edge of the sagging deck. He slides off. He grabs at the deck banister. The swirling water tugs and pulls at him.

He hauls himself back onto the deck.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The house pitches as Tom staggers in. Laura hugs Ella and Nathan protectively.

ELLA

Daddy?!

LAURA

Tom, what's happening?

TOM

The pole's buckled.

LAURA

What if it collapses?

The room lurches violently to one side. The table slides and crashes into a wall.

Tom is thrown violently into the door. He blacks out for a beat. Blood seeps from a cut on his forehead.

The house settles, rolling slightly with the current. Tom struggles to his feet.

EXT. BACK DECK - NIGHT

CRASH. The rest of the back deck sweeps away.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Laura glances across and sees water swirling past above window level. Rocks and branches and debris HAMMER the wall.

A shopping cart smashes through the window and clatters against the wall. Water pours in through the smashed window.

Laura and Ella climb onto the table. They haul Nathan up.

LAURA

Tom??

A baffled Tom searches for an answer.

TOM

Upstairs.

They climb down from the table. Tom opens the living room door. Water gushes in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom and Nathan, Laura and Ella wade across the room. The water washes up to their knees.

The French windows burst open and water torrents in.

TOM

The stairs.

Water laps their thighs. Their waists. They wade toward the stairs. Ella stops. She SCREAMS.

ELLA

There's something in the water.

A rattler rears out of the water. HISS.

Ella SCREAMS. Laura SCREAMS.

The water churns. Dozens, hundreds of snakes.

Nathan buries his face in his father's neck. Tom freezes. A rattler rears out of the water, inches from his face. Tom grabs a broom floating by. He swipes the snake away.

TOM

They're scared. They're as scared
as us.

Laura and Ella's faces contort with fear.

TOM

Move slowly. Slowly to the stairs.

All four wade slowly through the water. Snakes swirl around them. Finally - they reach the stairs.

TOM

Upstairs, Nate.

Nathan clambers off his father's back and up the stairs. Nate stops and offers his hand to Ella and helps her out of the water.

Nathan and Ella haul Laura from the water.

TOM

Go.

They climb the stairs. Tom clambers out of the water. He backs up the stairs, broom in front of him.

A RATTLER slithers onto the stairs. Tom thrusts the broom. The rattler rises - HISS. Tom swipes it away.

Tom retreats. More RATTLEERS slither after Tom. He swipes them away and backs up the stairs.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tom backs along the hall. The floor is thick with snakes, slithering toward him. Tom leaps through the first door.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tom slams the door behind him. He realizes he's alone.

TOM

Laura?!

LAURA (O.C.)

We're in our room.

TOM

Is the door locked?

LAURA (O.C.)
Yes. Where are you?

TOM
Bathroom.

LAURA (O.C.)
Are you all right?

TOM
I'm doin' fine, honey. Think I'll
take a shower.

LAURA (O.C.)
Can I join you?

Tom forces a chuckle.

INT. TOM & LAURA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Laura, Ella and Nathan sit on the bed. Laura laughs and
blinks back the tears. She hugs Ella and Nathan.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tom slumps against the wash basin.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly sweeps the land below with a searchlight. It's
completely under water - a few trees, a windmill, a barn roof
rise ghostly above the water.

GILLY
There!

HARRY, 30 clings to a satellite dish on a farmhouse roof. The
house is under water. The chopper hovers.

Harry waves them away and points.

Gilly swings the searchlight. It picks out JENNY, 25,
Harry's's wife standing on the roof of a submerged barn,
holding a baby deer in her arms.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

The rescue harness swings and reels with Jenny strapped in,
nursing the baby deer. It slowly rises.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Jenny passes the baby deer to Gilly.

JENNY

Poor little guy. Lost his mamma and
broke his leg.

Jenny clambers in.

Skip pilots the Kiowa toward Harry. It hovers over the house
roof and satellite dish. Gilly lowers the rescue harness.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tom sits on the floor, slumped against the bath. The house
shudders, like another pole is bending.

Tom scopes the bathroom. Nothing. He looks up and sees the
outlet to the attic.

Tom climbs onto the bath and then up onto the washbasin. He
can't quite reach. He stands on the tap. Still not high
enough. He stands on the window ledge. He can just reach.

He punches the trap door off. He grips the outlet's edge.

The house shudders. He swings in mid-air.

INT. ROOF/CEILING CAVITY - NIGHT

Tom hauls himself into the cavity. He crawls along a joist.

TOM

Hallo?

LAURA (O.C.)

Tom?

TOM

Honey?

LAURA (O.C.)

(below)

We're here.

Tom looks around. No outlet/trap door. He steps off the joist
onto the plaster. He jumps. It sags. He jumps again. Harder.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom falls through the ceiling, crashing on the bed in a cloud
of plaster and dust. Laura, Ella and Nathan hug him.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER HIGH SCHOOL, SPORTS HALL CAR PARK - NIGHT

Rain forms puddles in the car park but the ground is not submerged. The car park is packed with muddy farm trucks, rescue vehicles and police cars, flashers blinking.

An EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEER helps a LITTLE GIRL, 8, wrapped in a blanket and carrying a teddy bear out of his rescue vehicle.

Civilian VOLUNTEERS haul blankets, trestle tables and boxes of food and supplies from trucks and vans.

Jenny and Harry watch a PARAMEDIC examine the baby deer in the back of an ambulance.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER HIGH SCHOOL, FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Sheriff, Gilly and Skip stand by the Kiowa, studying an ordnance map.

SHERIFF

The Brooklyn Bridge is washed away.
Everyone north of the bridge is
evacuated. Except Charlie
Davenport.

SKIP

We'll check him out.

GILLY

(points to map)
What about the Whittaker's?

SHERIFF

Fred Whittaker passed a couple of
months back. The place is vacant.

SKIP

You sure?

SHERIFF

Sure I'm sure.

Skip crosses Whittaker's off his map.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom opens the door. Snakes HISS and bare their fangs. He slams the door.

Ella comforts a pale Nathan on the bed. Laura stares out the window.

LAURA

Listen!

She wrenches the window open. A distant helicopter WHUMPS.
Tom races to the window.

TOM
Hey! Hey!!

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Skip pilots the chopper toward the Whittaker place. It hovers. Gilly trains the searchlight on the Whittaker's house which lists on one pole. It's submerged to the second story.

GILLY
You sure there's no one there?

Skip shakes his head - no one there.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom climbs out the window. He slips on the window ledge, but clambers onto the roof of the house. He staggers to his feet.

TOM
Here! Back here!! We're here!!!

The chopper hovers.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly focuses the searchlight.

GILLY
I think I saw something.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

The searchlight sweeps less than a yard from Tom's feet. He chases the beam.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly shakes his head - nothing. The chopper peels off.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Tom waves his arms frantically.

TOM
We're here! Fuck you! Fuck you!!

Tom slumps on the roof. The rain washes over him.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly sweeps Snake River with the searchlight, picking out raging, roiling water. Back and forward. Gilly shakes his head, confused - where's Charlie's house?

The searchlight catches Charlie's TV, lodged in a tree. His sofa is wedged between rocks.

SKIP

Holy hell.

Gilly shakes his head.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Tom sees the chopper heading back. He starts waving. Shouting. The chopper gets closer.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Skip and Gilly are still lost in their thoughts.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Tom rips off his shirt and waves it frantically. Shouting. The chopper sweeps past.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom climbs back. Laura, Ella and Nathan look at him hopefully.

TOM

There's no rescue party. No cavalry. We're gonna have to find a way out of this ourselves.

The house staggers. They all grasp each other. It lurches again. Then slowly sinks.

And sinks. Water seeps in under the door.

Tom jumps to his feet and runs to the window. The water laps the window.

Nathan's breath rasps. Laura strokes his forehead.

The house slumps again. Water pours in through the window.

TOM

The roof.

Laura shepherds Nathan and Ella toward the window.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Tom helps Laura out the window. He holds her while she shins onto the roof.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom reaches for Nathan.

NATHAN
Ladies first.

ELLA
No. You go.

NATHAN
No. You go.

Tom scoops up Ella and helps her out the window.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Laura grabs Ella's hands and helps her up onto the roof.

Tom helps Nathan onto the ledge. Nathan sees the black waters swirling around his feet. His breath rasps. He struggles to get back inside.

NATHAN
No, dad.

Tom grips Nathan by the shoulders.

TOM
You know what the doctor said?

NATHAN
I'll grow out of it.

TOM
I'm sorry, son. But I need you to grow up real quick.

Nathan nods. Laura and Ella grab his hands and help him onto the roof.

Tom clambers onto the sill. Nathan and Ella help him onto the roof. The four sit on the roof and stare at each other. The house shudders. And sinks some more.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS HALL - NIGHT

Kim - from the gas station - unloads boxes of food and supplies from his pick-up and passes them to Donovan and Jackson.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

EVACUEES sit in the bleachers, wrapped in blankets, drinking soup or coffee.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Angie stands behind a trestle and ladles soup from a pot into a bowl. She passes it to an elderly FEMALE EVACUEE.

ELDERLY EVACUEE

Thank you, dear.

ANGIE

You're welcome.

Britt mans the coffee urn beside Angie.

BRITT

Coffee, ma'am.

Britt pours coffee.

Donovan drops a box on the end of the bench. He rips it open and unpacks cans. His cell rings.

DONOVAN

Hey, mom.

INT. CITY HALL - NIGHT

VOLUNTEERS sit around the conference table, working phones.

Warren and Joey, dressed in Emergency Service fatigues, study clusters of colored pins on a giant ordnance map on the wall. Annie is on the phone.

ANNIE

We've got a mayday from the Potters. They can't get out. Skip's evacuating out at Merrit's Creek and all our crews are on emergency calls.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Donovan disconnects his phone and looks at Jackson, who unpacks a box of supplies on the bench.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Donovan pilots his VW bus along a narrow road, and stares at the surrounding land, submerged in water.

DONOVAN

"Every living thing on the earth
was wiped out - people, animals
both large and small, and birds.
They were all destroyed."

JACKSON

Black Sabbath?

DONOVAN

Genesis.

JACKSON

Not into Peter Gabriel, man.

Donovan spots a submerged gate. He brakes.

EXT. FARM GATES - NIGHT

Donovan and Jackson untie a rubber raft from the roof rack.

EXT. FARM, OPEN WATER - NIGHT

Donovan steers with a tiller on the small outboard. The
rubber raft PUTTERS across open water. Jackson sweeps the
search light through the rain.

JACKSON

Shit!

They pass a scarecrow, submerged except for its hideously
grinning head.

They searchlight picks out ghostly trees and a windmill,
inches above the water, spinning in the wind.

EXT. POTTER'S FARMHOUSE, OPEN WATER - NIGHT

Jackson arcs the search light. It picks out a farmhouse, its
ground floor under water. POTTER, 80, squats on the roof.

EXT. POTTER FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The raft pulls in at the porch roof.

DONOVAN

You all right, Mr Potter?

POTTER

Hi, Donovan. Margaret, our cab's
here.

MARGARET, a sprightly 75, appears at the window.

MARGARET

I ain't goin' nowhere without my animals.

POTTER

Margaret, just get in the goddam boat.

DONOVAN

It's OK. We got room.

A dog BARKS. Potter and Margaret push a Mastiff, the size of a small horse onto the porch roof. It slides on the sloped roof, but Donovan grabs it and hauls it onto the raft.

Margaret hands out a cat. Another cat. It HISSES and scratches Donovan.

DONOVAN

Oww!

A Parrot SQUAWKS.

MARGARET

Can't forget Tweeter.

Margaret hands out a two feet high parrot in a cage.

TWEETER

What the fuck? What the fuck is goin' on?

POTTER

Hell, Margaret. It's like Noah's goddam ark.

Jackson places the cage on the raft.

Potter helps Margaret onto the porch roof. She slides down and Donovan helps her onto the raft.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Angie feeds an apple to Tweeter in his cage. The Potters sit, wrapped in blankets and drinking coffee, chatting with other EVACUEES.

Donovan stands before a trestle table. Joey, sits behind the trestle table, with an electoral roll before him.

JOEY

Frank and Margaret Potter.
Good job, Donovan.

Joey crosses them off his list.

DONOVAN
Have we lost anyone?

JOEY
Charlie Davenport.

DONOVAN
Charlie? Bummer.

JOEY
Place is gone. Nothin' there.

Donovan shakes his head sadly. Then he frowns.

DONOVAN
What about the Fishers?

Joey looks at him blankly.

DONOVAN
They're staying in the Whittaker
place.

JOEY
The Whittaker place is empty.

Donovan's heart skips a beat.

DONOVAN
No, it's not. Get onto Skip and
Gilly.

JOEY
They're out on a mayday. And they
got a list after that.

Donovan considers for a beat then charges off. Joey watches
him go - confused.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Tom and Laura try to shelter Ella and Nathan from the
sheeting rain.

TOM
I should have let you go with
Donovan.

ELLA
No, daddy. No.

She hugs Tom. They separate and Tom treads toward the edge of
the roof.

He sees the angry water only feet below. He spots a redwood tree by the house and beyond it the Suburban, on higher ground up by the gate. He calculates the jump from the roof to the redwood and the swim from the redwood to the Suburban.

EXT. WHITTAKER PLACE, UNDERWATER - NIGHT

The second pole buckles.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

The house lurches. Laura slips and slides over the edge.

NATHAN

Mom!!

She grips the eave and hangs by one hand. The raging water tears at her legs. She loses her grip on the eave. Tom grabs an arm. He hauls her onto the roof. They catch their breath.

The house pitches. And again. The house collapses beneath them and sinks into the water.

All four flail in the dark water.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The current snatches at them. Tom spots the Suburban, up at the gate.

TOM

The car. Stick together.

They swim toward the Suburban.

Nathan swims frantically but the currents drag him toward the furious whitewater. Tom swims after him and grabs him.

TOM

You can swim. I know you can.

Nathan nods. He and Tom stroll toward the Suburban.

EXT. WHITTAKER PLACE, FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Laura and Ella stand in water up to their waists by the car.

ELLA

C'mon, dad.

A sudden wave submerges Tom and Nathan. They surface, gasping for air. They're almost there but the current rips them away.

ELLA

Daddy!

Nathan grabs at the branch of a submerged tree. He holds it. Tom grabs the branch and they crawl into the shallows. Laura and Ella help them to their feet.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom and Ella pile into the front seats. Laura and Nathan climb into the back. They slump and try to catch their breath. Tom switches on the light.

TOM

I don't know why I put it on. It just makes me feel better.

He hugs Ella. Then turns and grasps Laura and Nathan and squeezes their hands.

Silence - what next? The rain beats down. Tom is baffled, beaten.

Nathan's eye falls on the GPS.

NATHAN

GPS.

Tom looks quizzically at Nathan.

NATHAN

It'll have the satellite map. Maybe there's a fire track. Or an old logging route.

Tom grins at Nathan. He keys in information and a satellite map appears on the screen.

Tom keys in commands. The map adjusts, focuses.

ELLA

(points to screen)
Look!

TOM

Looks like an old logging trail.

Tom magnifies the map.

TOM

It's on higher ground.

Laura grins. Tom chuckles and fires up the Suburban.

EXT. DRIVEWAY, GATE - NIGHT

The Suburban inches up the driveway. It slips, then slides, but fishtails through the gate.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

The Suburban edges slowly along the road.

GPS

Proceed east six hundred yards.

TOM

Honey, I want a divorce. I'm in love!

He blows a kiss at the GPS.

INT. SNAKE RIVER ROAD - NIGHT

The road descends. The Suburban creeps through the flood.

INT: SUBURBAN - NIGHT

All four peer anxiously through the slapping wipers.

GPS

Turn right on Road B 7645. One hundred yards.

All eyes turn to the right.

LAURA

I can't see it.

A couple of beats. They see the top of a fence post and top strand of wire.

GPS

You have missed your turn.

Tom brakes and reverses.

ELLA

Look. There's a gap.

Tom swings the Suburban off the road, towards the gap. The Suburban hits something. Stops. Tom backs off. Comes forward. RATTLE.

TOM

Must be a chain. A gate.

NATHAN

Go for it, dad.

Tom's foot sinks on the accelerator. The wheels spin. SNAP. The fence post gives and the chain ricochets off the windscreen. CRACK.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

The Suburban crawls through the trees, its headlights casting spooky shadows. BUMP - the Suburban hits a pothole.

LAURA

Are we still on the road?

GPS

One and three quarter miles to destination.

Tom grins.

EXT. MAIN ST, INTERSECTION - NIGHT

A boat powers along the empty flooded street hauling two whooping WATER SKIERS.

The jacked-up cherry red Ford F-350 coasts through the water and stops at the Main St intersection.

INT. FORD F-350 - NIGHT

Carl and Jimbo scope the flooded township.

JIMBO

The world is our lobster, Carl.

CARL

Oyster, man. The world is our oyster.

JIMBO

Whatever. Let's go shopping.

Jimbo spots the electrical goods and appliance store. His eyes light up.

EXT. ELECTRICAL STORE, REAR - NIGHT

Jimbo leaps out of the 350 and into the knee high water. He waves a crow bar.

Carl joins him and watches as he slides the crow bar between the door and frame. Jimbo heaves. Wood CRACKS and the door judders open.

INT. ELECTRICAL STORE - NIGHT

Carl and Jimbo wade through the water. Carl stops at the laptop computers.

CARL
Man, look at this. Three gig and
three fifty RAM.

Jimbo wades to the sound section.

JIMBO
We could do with a new sound
system, Carl.

Carl continues reading the specs.

CARL
Blue ray, blue tooth. Damn thing'd
blow me if I asked it nicely.

Jimbo pulls up at the TV section. He gazes at a back projection screen damn near the size of a basketball court.

JIMBO
Hi, beautiful.

Jimbo smiles lovingly at the TV.

EXT. STORE, REAR - NIGHT

Carl and Jimbo load the rear projection screen onto the back of the 350.

They freeze as they hear the WHUMP of chopper rotors. The Kiowa flies over - low. It keeps flying.

Carl and Jimbo keep loading.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom hits the brakes.

A swollen creek cascades down a gully, cutting the trail in front of them. Ella and Laura watch Tom anxiously.

Tom eases the Suburban down the side of the gully and into the water. Water laps the doors, then the windows.

The Suburban splutters, coughs.

Tom inches the Suburban forward. It skids out of the water and slides, trying to get traction on the side/wall of the gully. Tom hits the gas.

EXT. GULLY - NIGHT

The front wheels bite in the mud. The Suburban crests the gully.

Then the ground collapses beneath them. The track cracks wide open.

The Suburban bucks and sinks a couple of feet.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom panics and hits the accelerator.

EXT. GULLY - NIGHT

The wheels spin.

The gully wall splits. The bank slides and sinks. The Suburban slews sideways.

ELLA (O.C.)

Daddy!

EXT. CREEK GULLY - NIGHT

Mudslide.

The Suburban slides with the heaving mass of mud.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Nathan spots something through the rain.

NATHAN

Dad!

The creek, the mud and the Suburban slide toward the raging Snake River.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, BANK - NIGHT

The Suburban stops. Inches from the swirling water. Then lurches again. Stops.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom twists the ignition key. The engine ticks over. It fires. Stalls. Tom wrenches at the ignition key. Again. Nothing.

Silence.

TOM
Everyone. Try and stay calm.

The current rips at the Suburban.

And sucks it into the river.

BANG. BANG. Rocks and debris cannon into the bodywork. Glass SMASHES as a rock crashes into a headlight.

The feral torrent catches the Suburban. It picks up speed.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The roiling whitewater tosses the Suburban around.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Tom looks ahead in panic.

TOM
Brace!

The Suburban SMASHES into a giant boulder and ricochets. Back into the swirling, seething torrent.

Ella's side window SHATTERS. Water pours in.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The Suburban hits a huge redwood. Its hood stoves in. The Suburban keels.

INT. SUBURBAN - NIGHT

The Suburban starts to sink. Water pours in.

TOM
Ella! Get out!

He shoves her through the smashed window.

TOM
Nathan!

NATHAN
No, dad. No!

Laura - in the back seat.

LAURA
You've got to, honey.

She pushes him toward the front. He resists, fists flail.

NATHAN

No!

Laura pushes and Tom pulls. The water rises as the Suburban sinks and rocks in the current.

NATHAN

No! No!!

Tom shoves Nathan through the window. The Suburban sinks, trapping Tom and Laura inside.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The river sweeps Ella along. She strikes out for the bank. Nathan surfaces and the current catches him.

Ella sees a giant redwood, rising out of the water. Charlie's battered old pick-up is wedged in its branches. Ella grabs a branch. She sees Nathan bobbing behind her.

ELLA

Nathan!

He flails toward her. Ella grips the branch with one hand and grabs his wrist as he sweeps by. She holds tight against the current. Supreme effort - she tugs him toward her.

They cling to the branch. Ella scans the water anxiously.

ELLA

Mom? Dad?

Nothing. Laura finally surfaces.

ELLA & NATHAN

Mom!

Ella and Nathan grab her and haul her onto the branch.

ELLA

Daddy?

Ella feels something with her feet under water. She grabs it.

ELLA

Dad? He's caught in something.

She pushes and shoves. He bobs to the surface inches from Ella. Blue-faced, bloated, bearded.

It's Charlie.

Ella SCREAMS. She pushes Charlie off and into the turbulent river.

Tom surfaces and swims toward the tree. A current surge pushes him past. He hits a rock and can't move, pinned by the water.

LAURA
Are you all right

TOM
(chuckles)
I'm good, honey. Can you pass me a beer?

LAURA
Only if it's a Lite.

Tom sees a branch on his side of the tree, maybe six feet away. He slides up the rock out of the water. He leaps at the branch and grabs it. He hauls himself to the tree. And sits beside Laura. He squeezes her hand.

TOM
Damned if that water's still not rising. Everyone up.

All four climb up branches and cling to Charlie's pick-up.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Donovan, anxious, guns the bus along the high road, wipers slapping the windshield.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, REDWOOD TREE - NIGHT

Tom, Laura, Ella and Nathan cling to the pick-up. Tom squints through the rain and sees the high road across the river. He sees a couple of lamps or candles glowing in houses.

TOM
I gotta get help.

Laura shakes her head helplessly - how??

Tom sees the ferry shack. He sees the ferry cable stretched across the river.

LAURA
No, Tom. You'll kill yourself.

The waters rise.

NATHAN
No, dad. Please don't go. Please, dad, please.

Nathan's breath rasps. He can barely breathe. Laura looks at Tom - terrified. Tom grips Nathan by the shoulders.

TOM

I'll be back before you know it.

Nathan nods. He swallows his breath. He calmly nods. His breath is regular.

Tom squeezes Nate's hand. Ella's hand. Laura's hand. He jumps into the raging whitewater.

Laura, Ella and Nathan watch him flail in the black water.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, FERRY - NIGHT

Tom battles the current. The cable looms - fast.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, REDWOOD - NIGHT

Laura, Ella and Nathan watch - scared.

CUT TO:

Tom grabs the cable, which is a couple of feet above water level. He holds on for grim death. His feet reach for the loop of cable below and he finds it.

BACK TO:

Laura, Ellen and Nathan - a little hopeful.

CUT TO:

Tom edges across the river, foot by painful foot. The river tears at him.

BACK TO:

Laura sees Tom lose his footing. She gasps.

CUT TO:

Tom's feet scramble. He finds his footing. He keeps edging. The waves batter him. Smash him. Tom pauses, gasping for ragged breath.

BACK TO:

Nathan sees Tom is three quarters across.

NATHAN

(normal breath)

Do it, dad.

CUT TO:

Tom edges into a fast flowing channel. He can't move. He's exhausted, pinned. His feet slip off the lower cable.

Headlights swing onto him.

BACK TO:

Ella sees the VW bus pull up at the ferry.

ELLA

Donovan.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Donovan spots Tom clinging to the cable.

EXT. FERRY SHACK - NIGHT

Donovan kicks open the door.

INT. FERRY SHACK - NIGHT

Donovan shines his flashlight on the control panel. He switches the Auxillary power on.

He moves to the generator. He pulls the rope. Nothing. He yanks it, grunting with the exertion. He pulls a third time. It belches a cloud of noxious smoke, coughs, and ticks over.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, FERRY - NIGHT

Tom grits his teeth, but his grip loosens.

EXT. FERRY - NIGHT

Donovan drives the bus onto the ferry. He switches the ferry control to On.

Cog wheels CLANK. The ferry lurches into the wild river.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

A torrent of water cascades down the mountain.

EXT. DAM WALL - NIGHT

A MAINTENANCE ENGINEER stands on top of the dam wall. He sees water slam into the dam wall, inches below his feet.

He feels the wall shudder beneath him. The wall CRACKS. The crack widens. The wall gives way.

The Maintenance Engineer SCREAMS as he is swept off the wall and into the torrential water fall.

INT. DAM CONTROL TOWER - NIGHT

Harvey sees the wall breach on CCTV monitor.

HARVEY

Breach! We have a breach, people.
Release. Full release.

Harvey hits the button.

INT. DAM, WORKS CENTER - NIGHT

Giant cogwheels turn, pulleys spin, steel ropes tighten.

EXT. DAM, UNDERWATER - NIGHT

The floodgates open fully.

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBER - NIGHT

Annie listens grimly on phone.

ANNIE

Breach?... It's not your fault,
Harvey.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, FERRY - NIGHT

The ferry pulls up beside Tom. It bucks in the wind and current. Donovan leans over the ferry and hauls the exhausted Tom on board.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, REDWOOD TREE - NIGHT

Laura, Ella and Nathan cling to Charlie's pick up. It GROANS and shifts. Ella loses her grip. Laura and Nathan grab her.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE, REAR - NIGHT

Carl and Jimbo load a pair of brand new chainsaws into the back of the 350.

INT. F-350 - NIGHT

Carl and Jimbo sit in the 350 and gaze at the new powerboats and jet skis in the boat sales yard.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, FERRY - NIGHT

The ferry pulls up at the swollen river bank.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, REDWOOD TREE - NIGHT

Laura, Ella and Nathan cling to Charlie's pick-up.

NATHAN

(calmly)

We're gonna have to swim for it.

Laura and Ella nod.

NATHAN

All together.

Nathan nods. They leap in together.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER FERRY - NIGHT

Tom and Donovan wait anxiously. The current slams Nathan into the side of the ferry. Then Ella, then Laura.

Donovan and Tom haul Nathan up. Then Ella. Laura skews in the whitewater and loses her grip. Tom grabs her, holds on and hauls her in.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Angie and Britt serve soup and coffee to a line of EVACUEES. Annie approaches.

ANNIE

You're doing a great job, girls.

BRITT

Thank you.

ANNIE

The dam wall's breached. There's going to be a whole lot more people coming through here.

ANGIE

We're gonna need more supplies.

ANNIE

I'll OK whatever you need. Have you seen Donovan?

ANGIE

He was going to check on those people from LA.

ANNIE
What people from LA?

BRITT
They're renting the Whittaker
place.

ANNIE
(horrified)
The Whittaker place?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Skip stands beside his chopper with Annie and Gilly.

GILLY
He's gone to the Whittaker place?

SKIP
The dam wall's blown, Annie. It'll
be underwater any time now.

ANNIE
I know.

Skip and Gilly leap into the Kiowa.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, UPSTREAM CANYON - NIGHT

Upstream.

A tsunami of furious whitewater races through the canyon.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER FERRY - NIGHT

Downstream.

The ferry bucks in the wild river. The cables swing and stretch.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Tom, Laura and Nathan sit on the mattress in the back.

TOM
I used to dream about a bus and a
mattress.

NATHAN
A shaggin' wagon.

Donovan peers through the side window.

CRACK! Tom tenses.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, REDWOOD - NIGHT

A wave crashes against the redwood. The cracked branch snaps off. A second, bigger wave hurls Charlie's truck out of the redwood and into a rock. It bounces off the water. And again.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Tom stares through his window and sees Charlie's truck barrel across the water toward them.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, FERRY - NIGHT

BANG!

The old truck smashes into the ferry.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Tom, Laura, Ella, Nathan and Donovan crash off the bus walls.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, FERRY - NIGHT

The ferry bucks and lists. Water surges onto the ferry. One cable snaps and whiplashes. The ferry buckles in the raging water, hanging on by the second steel cable.

The cable rips off its pulley and the ferry breaks free. It lists in the whitewater.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Everyone bounces off the walls.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, FERRY - NIGHT

The ferry SNAPS in two. It sinks, sucking the VW down.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, UNDERWATER - NIGHT

The bus touches the bottom. Scrapes. Rolls. Then rises.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The VW surfaces and floats in the current.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Donovan and Tom gaze out the window - amazed.

DONOVAN
She does float.

BANG. BANG. Rocks and debris hit the bus.

Nathan frowns.

NATHAN
Listen.

Everyone listens intently. They hear a distant RUMBLE.
Getting louder. Becoming a roar.

They look up the Snake River Canyon and see -

- The tsunami of water bearing down on them.

Tom grasps Laura and Nathan by the hand.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The wave picks the bus up and sweeps it along like a surfboard.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Donovan grips the steering wheel uselessly. The others all hang on for dear life.

Giant redwoods loom - fast.

Ella covers her face as the bus smashes through the branches.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly sees the VW bus career along the crest of the wave. He slaps Skip on the shoulder and points.

Skip spots it.

SKIP
Holy Moley.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Laura clutches Nathan and Tom clutches at the mattress as the wave sweeps them along the valley.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly peers through binoculars.

GILLY

He's in there. Make that two.
Jesus, make that a party.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Ella spots the chopper. She grabs Donovan's arm.

ELLA

Look!

Donovan looks at the chopper hopefully.

EXT. RAZORBACK ROCKS - NIGHT

Water roils furiously around the deadly rocks.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly points to the rocks.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Ella and Donovan watch in horror as the VW bus rockets towards Razorback. Ella reaches for Donovan's hand and grips tight.

Razorback Rocks loom toward them - fast.

Closer. Ella closes her eyes for impact.

EXT. RAZORBACK ROCKS - NIGHT

The wave surges. The VW grazes the first rock. Sweeps by the second rock. But heads for the last rock.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

The wave lifts the bus. The front wheels and chassis clear the rock by inches.

GRIND OF METAL. The rock shears off the rear axle.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Skip watches the VW bus helplessly.

SKIP

We got Twin Peaks comin' up. And
then Hellhole.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The bus skews in the whitewater. Then rolls over and over.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Nathan, Laura and Tom are tossed around. Laura cries in pain as she bounces off the wall.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The crest of the tsunami curls. It crashes on the bus.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Donovan is hurled into the windshield. He blacks out, blood seeps from his forehead.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The bus rolls and goes under.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, UNDERWATER - NIGHT

The bus tumbles over and over along the river bed.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Skip and Gilly watch the empty waters.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, UNDERWATER - NIGHT

The water lifts the bus.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The river spits the bus out. It arcs through the air.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Skip and Gilly watch in disbelief as the bus hits the water behind the wave and keeps floating.

Gilly lowers the harness.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

The bus floats along in the afterwave.

TOM
Everyone, all right?

Everyone nods. Ella sees the unconscious, bleeding Donovan.

ELLA
Donovan?

Water seeps through a crack in the VW's wall.

The current picks up the VW's pace. Ella cradles the unconscious Donovan's head. He comes to and sees Ella smiling at him. She sees the harness brush the front of the bus.

ELLA
Look!

Tom staggers to his feet. He sees the water trickling in. He sees Twin Peaks looming up. He spots the VW's sliding door.

TOM
Everyone against the side.

Tom, Laura and Nathan lean against the side of the bus.

TOM
One, two, three.

They heave. The bus rolls, but stays upright. Tom gives the signal. They all heave. The bus teeters, then rolls onto its side. Tom slides the side door - which faces up - open.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

The harness hovers in front of the VW - just out of reach.

GILLY
Back off.

Skip eases the throttle a tad.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Tom and Donovan heft Ella into the dangling harness. They lift Nathan beside her and Ella buckles the restrainer.

Tom gives Skip the thumbs up.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The harness rises.

INT. CHOPPER CABIN - NIGHT

Gilly helps Nathan and Ella into the chopper.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Water pours into the bus.

The harness hovers over the bus. Tom and Donovan heave Laura up through the door. Tom grips Laura's hand.

TOM

I saw our life flash by. I wouldn't have missed a second of it.

LAURA

Me neither. I love you. And it's not over yet.

TOM

(to Donovan)

Now you.

DONOVAN

Captain's last man off. Rule of the sea.

Twin Peaks looms ahead. Tom and Donovan clock it.

TOM

Oh crap.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly sees Twin Peaks coming up fast.

GILLY

Altitude!

Skip heaves on the joy stick. The chopper banks and steeples.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, TWIN PEAKS - NIGHT

Laura swings up inches over the peaks.

The VW POUNDS into the rock. And wedges between the Twin Peaks.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Tom lies unconscious on the floor of the bus, his head bleeding. Donovan crawls toward him.

Water pours in the open side door.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

The chopper banks and 360s.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Water laps over Tom. Donovan lifts his head out of the water. Tom cries in pain. Donovan palpates Tom's arm.

DONOVAN

Broken.

A wave hammers the bus. The body cracks.

EXT. TWIN PEAKS - NIGHT

Donovan helps Tom climb onto the roof of the bus. The helicopter hovers.

Donovan reaches for the rope - it swings by, just out of reach. The chopper hovers. The harness swings towards him.

The VW cracks further, almost splitting in two.

INT. CHOPPER - NIGHT

Laura sees a wave swelling and rolling toward them.

LAURA

Tom!

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, TWIN PEAKS - NIGHT

Donovan grabs for the rope - as the wave hits the bus, snapping it in two.

Donovan grabs Tom and they grasp the roof racks.

Donovan unties the raft as the bus sinks. He hauls Tom into the raft. The seething current catches the raft as Donovan clammers on.

The chopper makes another pass. The harness dangles.

Tom looks around and sees the Zip Line. He looks up at the Kiowa and points at the Zip Line cables, stretching across the river.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly spots the Zip Line cables.

GILLY

Skip!

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, ZIP LINE - NIGHT

The harness and rope wrap around the Zip Line cable.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

The Kiowa bucks and jerks. Ella screams. Laura almost falls out of the cabin. Nathan grabs her.

The chopper strains but can't move - held by the rope.

SKIP

The winch!

Gilly hits the release and the winch tears from the chopper.

It hits the river below.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The chopper breaks free.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, RAFT - NIGHT

The raft twists and corkscrews in the feral whitewater.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly points.

GILLY

Hellhole.

Hellhole swirls and roils ahead

LAURA

They can't go through that.

Gilly grabs a coil of rope. He knots one end into a rough harness.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER ROAD - NIGHT

The tsunami wave crashes into the row of fishing shacks. They smash like matchstick houses.

It smashes into Joey's Whitewater Rafting and it blows apart.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

A microwave, a TV, a bed, a Lazy-boy, an inflatable sex doll - pop to the surface.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

Tom lays exhausted on the raft. It bounces off a rock. Tom clutches his broken arm.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly knots the other end of the rope around his waist. He sees the raft below and tosses the rope out. He braces, feet against the wall.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

Tom is weakening. Donovan reaches for the rough harness, hovering over him. The whitewater tosses the boat away from the harness.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly - still in the brace position.

GILLY
How we doin'?

Nathan peers out the doorway.

NATHAN
Down!

Skip adjusts the joystick.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

Donovan grabs the harness. He helps Tom into it. The raft hits a rock and catapults. Tom loses his grip.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Laura's hand goes to her mouth. Ella bites her lip.

ELLA
Daddy.

Skip looks ahead - Hellhole.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

Donovan sees Hellhole coming up fast. He hacks at the water with his paddle - no use.

DONOVAN
We have to jump. Now.

Tom hears Hellhole. He stares at his watery grave.

DONOVAN
We'll stick together. I'll help
you.

Tom holds up his broken arm and shakes his head. He pushes Donovan over the side.

Tom looks up at the Kiowa and sees Laura, Nathan and Ella safe, but peering, terrified through the door. He waves. Just as - Hellhole sucks him and the raft in.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Laura closes her eyes in pain. Ella weeps. Nathan furiously blinks back tears.

INT. HELLHOLE, UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Tom is tossed along the river bed. He rolls and bounces off rocks like a rag doll.

The whirlpool hurls him under a flat ledge. Tom tries to break free but his leg is wedged under a rock. And the raft traps him under the ledge. He pulls and tugs his leg. He's running out of breath. His eyes close.

He forces his eyes open. He sees the faint circle of sky through Hellhole. Then the golden light of the chopper's searchlight, beckoning him.

Tom feels for the raft's air valve. He tears at it and breaks the seal. His fingers curl around the gunwale rope.

The escaping air jets the raft into the whirlpool. Tom holds on for grim death with his good hand. Holds.

Tom's leg wrenches free. He screams silently in pain. The raft rips Tom through the water.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

The raft POPS to the surface.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Laura spots the raft, a hundred yards downstream. Then Tom surfaces.

LAURA

There!

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

Tom is weakening. He bangs into the TV set. The Lazy-boy.

He grabs at a door and clings to it. He clammers onto it and lies - spent.

Fifty yards away, Donovan clutches to the inflatable sex doll. He pushes it off and grips a redwood log.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

The tsunami bears down on the street. It flattens a bungalow. It swamps a Craftsman home. Then pulverises a row of houses.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER, TOWNSHIP - NIGHT

The tsunami swamps the church. The blue cross topples, the church disintegrates.

EXT. MAIN ST. - NIGHT

The jacked-up 350 plows through the water. It tows a brand new power boat, and a pair of gleaming new jet skis.

INT. FORD F-350 - NIGHT

Jimbo is at the wheel, Carl beside him.

CARL

Retail therapy. You can't beat it.

The 350 approaches a stop sign, visible above the water.

JIMBO

I can't see no police.

CARL

You're an outlaw, Jimbo. No doubt about you.

The 350 edges into the intersection. They look to their left and their jaws drop.

The tsunami hurls a truck at them. BANG! It smashes into the 350 and the water swallows them whole.

EXT. MAIN ST - NIGHT

The tsunami flattens Kim's Gas Station, Floyd's barber shop, the Mom and Pop diner, the electrical goods store.

EXT. BOAT YARD - NIGHT

The 350 cannons through the fence and smashes through a row of boats.

EXT. SNAKE RIVER - NIGHT

Tom lays exhausted on the door. He sees Donovan on the log. Donovan hears the roar of the Falls.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Skip sees the Falls looming ahead. He peers down.

SKIP

I can't see what I'm doing!

Nathan sees Gilly braced against the wall, the rope feeding out of the chopper. Nathan takes a deep breath and leans out of the chopper. Ella watches him anxiously.

NATHAN

Lower.

EXT. KIOWA - NIGHT

The Kiowa descends. Hovers. Ten feet above Donovan.

Two hundred yards to the Falls.

Donovan grabs the rope.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Gilly braces against the wall, taking Donovan's weight.

EXT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Donovan clammers onto the Kiowa's skid.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Nathan sees Donovan on the skid.

NATHAN
We got him.

Skip spots Tom on the door. One hundred yards to the Falls.

EXT. KIOWA - NIGHT

The Kiowa drops. Four feet above the water. Donovan holds out his hand. Tom reaches.

Seventy five yards to the Falls.

INT. KIOWA - NIGHT

Nathan leans out further. He slips. Ella grabs him.

NATHAN
Lower.

EXT. KIOWA - NIGHT

The Kiowa skims a foot above the water.

50 yards to the Falls.

Donovan grasps Tom's good hand. The force of the Fall's water grabs Tom.

The Kiowa flies over the edge of the waterfall.

Donovan holds onto Tom who swings in mid-air, two hundred feet above the water crashing into the rocks below.

Donovan heaves and Tom clambers onto the landing skid. The Kiowa soars to safety.

EXT. MAIN ST - DAWN

A MAN and his dog row a boat down Main St. Past the devastated stores, past Carl and Jimbo's wrecked 350.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAWN

A light comes on in a house. Lights come on in all the houses.

EXT. HOUSE - DAWN

Water flows down a house's driveway. It flows down the gutter and into a storm drain.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAWN

The rain has stopped.

Water trickles down a drain.

Tom, his busted arm in a sling, Laura, Ella and Nathan huddle in blankets, close together on the back of a pick-up truck which is parked on the edge of the football field.

They stare at the devastated Main St below.

TOM

We've got five days of vacation left.

LAURA

New York?

ELLA

Cancun?

NATHAN

Orlando?

TOM

We could go home. Or we could stay here and help fix up this mess.

Laura, Ella and Nathan smile and nod.

LAURA & ELLA & NATHAN

Yeah.

Automatic sprinklers BURST into life and shower the school's flower beds and lawns.

FADE OUT.