

THE ANGRY ROAD

Written by

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EXT./EST. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - DAY

A four-lane interstate highway cuts through a dry, 110-degree landscape. A blue 10-year-old sedan driven by EDEN DAVIDSON (31) cruises just above the speed limit. Traffic is light.

INT. EDEN'S CAR - DAY

Eden's car is loaded down with motley boxes, small appliances, and clothes on hangers. She taps her finger to the country western MUSIC on the radio. HYPO (5), her cat, sits on his carrier in the passenger seat, watching the road.

EDEN

That's our exit, Hypo.

Eden passes under a rectangular, green-and-white guide sign. It reads, "SR 235, Progress, 1/2 Mile."

EDEN (CONT'D)

Our road home.

A sports car blows past her on the right, kicking up dust.

EDEN (CONT'D)

If we don't get killed first.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - DAY

Eden's sedan, its right blinker on, takes the exit to Progress. Ahead, there's a TV remote truck, microwave mast deployed. The truck shouts "Action News at 10."

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY OVERPASS - DAY

On the overpass, TV reporter HEIDI HILL (28) and camera operator STOREY JACKSON (40) wrap up a live report.

HEIDI

...a highway patrol spokesperson says the investigation is ongoing. Heidi Hill, Action News.

A beat.

STOREY

Clear.

HEIDI

Okay. Let's put this piece to bed.

Without warning, a car zooms by, honking its horn. Heidi coughs at the dust.

HEIDI (CONT'D)

Asshole!

As Storey and Heidi break down the equipment, Eden's car makes a gentle turn onto SR 235.

INT. EDEN'S CAR - DAY

Eden passes a fast-food franchise and a gas station.

She eases by an uncontrolled intersection. The cross street is labeled "Furious Way."

A highway crew works the intersection. Orange cones and a "Detour" sign prevent a turn onto Furious Way, but Eden isn't taking that route.

She waves a greeting to the FLAGGER. He waves back.

Hypo keeps his eyes on the road.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - DAY

Eden accelerates on the two-lane highway. Heat shimmers off the black asphalt and fresh striping. The road looks almost new.

Fallow fields and distant ranch houses line the road.

A guide sign reads, "Progress 19". A speed limit sign says "50".

INT. EDEN'S CAR - DAY

Eden moves through cuts in the low hills. MUSIC on the radio competes with the A/C's fan.

Hypo is curled up on his carrier.

A guide sign reads, "Progress 13".

In her rear-view mirror, over the piles of boxes, Eden watches a large, late-model red pickup come up behind her. It comes close enough that she sees scratches and dents in the front grill.

The truck is high off the ground. Eden can't see the driver. The truck tailgates her, flashing its lights, and honking its horn.

EDEN
(irritated)
Jesus Christ.

Eden's speedometer shows 55.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - DAY

The truck rides her bumper. It flashes its lights and honks a second time.

INT. EDEN'S CAR - DAY

Eden sees no oncoming traffic. The truck is inches away.

EDEN
Just pass me, for God's sake.

Anxious, Eden eases closer to the shoulder.

Hypo crawls into his carrier.

The truck swerves over to the oncoming lane and accelerates. The diesel engine ROARS. Black exhaust pours out of the tailpipe. Eden sees a man's finger signaling the universal insult.

Eden pulls over. A little rattled, she drinks water from a bottle.

EDEN (CONT'D)
I'm going to need a bigger car,
Hypo.

Eden scratches her cat.

She's at a turnoff onto a private, paved road. Signage announces, "Opportunity Resource Explorers. Deliveries 8 AM to 3 PM. Visitors must check in at the office."

A HORN advertises the arrival of a semi and its trailer from the facility. The logo and company name of "ORE" decorate both. The truck and trailer head toward the freeway.

EDEN (CONT'D)
Fifteen years away is longer than I
thought.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - DAY

Eden continues on her way to Progress.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EDEN'S CAR - DAY

Eden comes to Progress, population 10,500. SR 235 morphs into Main Street. Side streets branch off. Low brick buildings, strip malls, gas stations, and empty lots line the thoroughfare.

An art deco library serves as the town's centerpiece.

She drives slowly past Progress Elementary School, which is next to Progress High School. Eden lingers. AUDIO memories of children playing, class bells ringing, and high school football games come to mind.

Checking the map on her phone, Eden parks in front of the Whitman County Free Clinic. It's a two-story standalone building between "The Squeeze Inn" diner and "Progress Hardware". The clinic's storefront is little more than a picture window and a glass door.

EDEN

Welcome home, Hypo.

EXT. WHITMAN COUNTY FREE CLINIC - DAY

Eden exits her car to stretch. She's wearing jeans, t-shirt, and hiking shoes. A couple of parking spaces away, a red pickup truck waits for its owner. Eden notices the damaged grill. It's the pickup that buzzed her on the way in.

PASQUALE "PASCO" CARBONE (45), wearing a ball cap, jeans, and a jacket with the ORE logo, comes out of the diner with a to-go order.

Eden watches him open the driver's side door of the pickup. She approaches him.

EDEN

Another inch or two and you would've left some of that red on my bumper.

PASCO

Excuse me?

EDEN

You practically ran me off the road into town.

PASCO

Do I know you?

EDEN

You introduced yourself to me while I was driving my car.

Eden gestures toward her blue sedan.

PASCO

Oh yeah, I remember. Over by the cutoff. Miss Pokey.

Pasco climbs into his truck.

EDEN

You owe me something.

PASCO

I don't recall signing any I-O-U's.

EDEN

An apology.

PASCO

For what?

EDEN

For rudeness. And imperiling my safety.

PASCO

Look, I don't know who you are or what you're about. But maybe you should think about getting a real rig before lecturing people about their driving habits. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have errands to run. Good day to you.

Pasco drives off. Eden returns to her car, disgusted. She collects Hypo, putting him into a backpack carrier.

EDEN

Hypo, I don't remember anyone like that jerk in high school. People were pretty nice when I lived here before. Place change, maybe.

She walks into the clinic. The door says, "Whitman County Free Clinic. M-F 9-3. Emergencies: Call 9-1-1."

INT. WHITMAN COUNTY FREE CLINIC - DAY

A shopkeeper's bell TINKLES when Eden enters. The tiny waiting room is clean and simple. A waiting FEMALE PATIENT (31) has an arm in a cast. Another MAN and WOMAN are absorbed by their phones.

Eden approaches a reception counter. MILLIE WHITE (42), the clinic's lead nurse, taps a keyboard. She's friendly and frumpy.

Behind her, two female workers, RHONDA (33) and JANE (34), glance up from their paperwork.

MILLIE
May I help you?

EDEN
I'm Eden Davidson.

Eden turns to show her cat.

EDEN (CONT'D)
This is my cat, Hypo.

MILLIE
Oh, Eden! Wonderful! So glad you made it. How was your trip in?

EDEN
Sorry if I'm late. I ran into some traffic.

MILLIE
Around here? Oh, you're funny.
(to the waiting room)
Hey everyone. This is Eden, our new executive director and medical director.

The waiting room crowd offers desultory greetings. Rhonda and Jane greet Eden as well.

MILLIE (CONT'D)
(to Eden)
Your new office is right this way.

Millie leads Eden through a gate into a hallway. An inquisitive Rhonda and Jane follow Eden.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The hallway leads past two miniscule exam rooms. One is open. Eden takes a quick look inside.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

The director's office is at the end of the hall, across from the broom closet.

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

The desk takes up half the tiny room. A bulletin board, posters, a calendar, and a chart of the human body hang on the walls.

MILLIE

I'm sorry it's so small. We need more space.

Eden eases her backpack onto the desk.

EDEN

I wasn't expecting the Ritz. How long has the clinic been here?

Eden unpacks two traveling food bowls.

MILLIE

Almost 40 years. It used to be a gun shop.

Eden puts cat food in one bowl. She hands the second bowl to Millie.

EDEN

Would you mind putting some water into this bowl?

MILLIE

Erm, sure.

INT. BROOM CLOSET AT THE CLINIC - DAY

In the dim closet, an ancient faucet drips into a sink among the cleaning supplies and personal protective gear. Millie fills the bowl.

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden unzips the backpack and lets Hypo on the desk. He sniffs around. Millie hands the water bowl to Eden, who places it in front of Hypo.

MILLIE

I don't mean to be rude, but is a cat really appropriate for a medical clinic?

EDEN

Yeah, I'm allergic to cats. But Hypo is hypoallergenic. That's where he gets his name.

MILLIE

What? Oh. I thought it was from hypodermic needle. Hah!

Rhonda and Jane nod and grin. Hypo jumps off the desk and is out the door.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

Oh, no!

EDEN

Don't worry. He's just checking out the environment. He'll be back. See?

Hypo jumps up on the desk and feeds.

MILLIE

Is there anything I can get you, Eden?

EDEN

I'd actually like to get right to work.

MILLIE

Oh, that would be great. We're already behind today. I'll set you up with Heather Bronson in Exam 1.

Millie exits, followed by Rhonda and Jane.

INT. BROOM CLOSET AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden picks out a disposable gown and dons it.

INT. EXAM ROOM ONE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Millie ushers a disheveled, grumpy HEATHER BRONSON (62) into the exam room. Heather has the broken arm. A computer monitor shows a login screen.

MILLIE

You're lucky, Heather. You're the first patient of our new nurse practitioner.

Eden enters.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

She's all ready for you, Eden.

Eden extends her hand to Heather.

EDEN

Hello. My name's Eden Davidson.

Heather looks at Eden's hand as if it was covered in filth.

Eden pulls her hand back. She washes her hand in the sink, using a medical scrubbing method.

EDEN (CONT'D)

I've just pulled in after a two-day drive. But it looks like you've been waiting a long time. Waiting rooms are so boring. There's not even a TV in there. Can't even watch the Shopping Channel. Would you be more comfortable if I wore a mask?

HEATHER

I don't mind if you don't.

Eden puts on nitrile gloves. She sits in front of the computer.

EDEN

Well, I can't look at your chart. I can't log in. But it's pretty clear you've got a broken arm. Maybe you could just tell me what happened, Miss...

HEATHER

Missus. Heather Bronson.

EDEN

May I call you Heather?

HEATHER

I had a car accident. A week ago.

EDEN

Goodness. Was anyone else hurt?

HEATHER

No, but I wish the driver of the other car was.

EDEN

I don't understand.

HEATHER

He ran me off of the road.

EDEN

Really?

HEATHER

Rode my bumper like he was going to climb in the back seat. Scared the shit out of me.

EDEN

Was it a pickup truck?

HEATHER

No, it was just a regular car. Like mine.

Eden starts to examine Heather's cast and exposed parts of her arm.

EDEN

Did the police do anything?

HEATHER

The cops around here suck up to the mine. They don't care about folks like me.

EDEN

Are you in any pain? Your arm, I mean.

HEATHER

No. A little. Nothing a glass of whiskey won't fix. I'm a tough old bird. Say, you're Pete Davidson's kid, aren't you?

EDEN

Yeah. He ran Progress Hardware next door.

HEATHER

How is he?

EDEN

He passed three years ago. Mom's gone too.

HEATHER

Sorry to hear it. I liked him. Never met your mom.

EDEN

I don't see any redness or swelling. I think your arm is healing well.

Millie pokes her head in.

MILLIE

I'm sorry to interrupt, but you're needed at the front desk, Eden.

EDEN

I'm still working with Missus Bronson.

HEATHER

Heather. It's alright.

EDEN

(to Heather)

Promise me you'll call the clinic if you have any pain or if a fever comes up, okay.

Eden follows Millie.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Millie, I can't get into the computer. Can you note in Heather's chart-

A police scanner buzzes in the clinic's administrative area. Millie hushes Eden. A DISPATCHER'S VOICE cuts in.

DISPATCHER (O.C.)

Delta Two-Four. What's your status?

(beat)

Repeating. Delta Two-Four. What's your status?

OFFICER (O.C.)
Base Two. On scene.

MILLIE
(to Eden and the others)
That's Mason.

BEGIN INTERCUT

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - DAY

DEPUTY SHERIFF MASON RUIZ (33) exits his patrol car on the shoulder of SR 235. Below him, at the bottom of an embankment, a small, battered pickup has rolled over. Steam rises from the radiator.

The Dispatcher's VOICE comes over his two-way.

DISPATCHER (O.C.)
Delta Two-Four. Your 10-20?

MASON
About a mile east of the mine
cutoff. Stand by.

Mason descends the embankment. He approaches the pickup.

MASON (CONT'D)
(into the two-way)
I've got one vehicle. No occupants.

DISPATCHER (O.C.)
Delta Two-Four. Do you need
assistance?

Mason comes around the vehicle and sees ALBERTO GARCIA (40).

MASON
(to Alberto)
Ah, Christ, Al. Was there anyone
else with you in the pickup?

Alberto shakes his head no.

MASON (CONT'D)
(into his radio)
One person in view. No others
visible. Victim conscious. Bleeding
from a scalp wound.

INT. WHITMAN COUNTY FREE CLINIC - DAY

Eden and the others in the clinic listen to the radio traffic.

DISPATCHER (O.C.)
Delta Two-Four. Whitman County F-D
is dispatched.

MASON (O.C.)
Negative Base Two. That'll take too
long. I want to get him to the
clinic.

EDEN
He should take him to the hospital
in Whitman City.

MILLIE
That's 45 minutes away.

MASON (O.C.)
I've got him in the car. ETA the
clinic: ten minutes.

DISPATCHER (O.C.)
Affirmative, Delta Two-Four.
Advising F-D.

END INTERCUT

MILLIE
(to the workers)
Okay, ladies. Let's get Exam One
cleaned up and ready.

INT. EXAM ROOM ONE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Millie and Eden prepare the room. Eden clearly knows what she's doing. So does Millie.

EDEN
I'll take the lead on this one,
Millie.

Millie is a little hesitant.

EDEN (CONT'D)
Look, I know you're used to running
the show. I spent three years in a
trauma center. I've got this, but I
want you nearby. I need your
experience.

Millie nods.

Rhonda pokes her head in.

RHONDA
They're here.

INT. WAITING ROOM AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Just as Eden and Millie come in, Mason and Alberto arrive. Alberto holds a compress on his head. His shirt is soaked in blood.

EDEN
Come through.

Eden takes Alberto by the arm.

Mason hesitates.

MASON
(to Eden)
Wait. Who're you?

Eden ignores Mason.

MILLIE
She's the new medical director.

INT. EXAM ROOM ONE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden guides Alberto onto the exam table. Eden takes off the compress.

Mason comes to the door.

EDEN
I'm sorry, Officer. Do you need to be here?

ALBERTO
It's okay.

MASON
He's my dad's cousin.

EDEN
(to Alberto)
What's your name, sir?

ALBERTO
Garcia. Alberto Garcia.

EDEN

You've got a nasty laceration. Can you tell me what happened? A car accident, right? We heard on the police scanner.

ALBERTO

(in Spanish)

A car ran me off the road.

MASON

He says a car ran him-

EDEN

I speak Spanish.

(in Spanish to Alberto)

You said someone ran you off the road?

ALBERTO

(in Spanish)

Yes. I was on the highway. I'd just passed the mine cutoff when a truck cut me off. I'm lucky I'm not dead.

EDEN

(in Spanish)

Was it a pickup? What color was it?

ALBERTO

(in pain; in Spanish)

I don't remember. My brain was all, erm, foggy, you know?

EDEN

(in Spanish)

You're going to be fine. You're going to need some stitches. Do you hurt anywhere else?

Alberto shakes his head.

EDEN (CONT'D)

(in English)

Millie, can you take over? I want to talk to this officer.

INT. HALLWAY AT THE CLINIC - DAY

EDEN

Officer, I think you have a problem.

MASON

Is he going to be alright?

EDEN

He's got a five-inch laceration on his scalp. He should be evaluated for a concussion. You should've taken him to Whitman City.

MASON

He's family. He said he wanted to come here. Who are you?

EDEN

Sorry. I'm Eden Davidson.

MASON

You're a doctor?

EDEN

I'm a nurse practitioner.

MASON

Where's the doctor who worked her before?

EDEN

This place can't afford a doctor.

MASON

Maybe I should've taken Al to Whitman City.

EDEN

I'm not going to argue my qualifications to treat your relatives, Officer Ruiz.

MASON

Deputy Ruiz.

EDEN

Let's go into my office.

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden and Mason take seats. Hypo sits indifferently on the desk.

MASON

You allow cats in here?

EDEN
Look, Deputy Ruiz-

MASON
Mason's okay. I expect we'll see
each other often.

EDEN
I've been here two hours, and I've
already seen two patients with
injuries sustained in car
accidents.

MASON
Okay.

EDEN
Both my patients said they had
something to do with road rage.

MASON
Hmm. Did they file reports?

EDEN
I was harassed by someone driving a
large red pickup. Scared the hell
out of me.

MASON
Did you see the driver?

EDEN
No, but I saw the truck right out
here and talked to someone who was
probably driving it.

MASON
What's his name?

EDEN
Didn't catch it.

MASON
Yeah, well. I know you're new here-

EDEN
I'm not. I grew up here. I'm Pete
Davidson's daughter.

MASON
I see. But you've been gone.

EDEN
About fifteen years.

MASON

That's a long time. Maybe things
have changed. People have changed.

Millie comes to the office door.

MILLIE

I'm done with Mister Garcia. He
wants to see you, Eden.

INT. EXAM ROOM ONE AT THE CLINIC

Alberto is pulling himself together when Eden, Millie, and
Mason arrive.

EDEN

You're looking much better, Mister
Garcia.

ALBERTO

(in English)

I just wanted to say thank you,
Miss.

EDEN

Eden. Davidson.

ALBERTO

It was the strangest feeling. It's
like my blood was boiling. I wanted
to kill the guy.

MASON

You couldn't hurt a fly, cousin.
I'll take you home.

Eden guides Alberto out of the exam room to the waiting room.

INT. WAITING ROOM AT THE CLINIC - DAY

MASON

(to Eden)

A word of advice. Be ready for more
accidents on that road. It's got a
bad reputation, honestly.

ALBERTO

Everyone here calls it, "el camino
enojado".

EDEN

"The angry road"?

ALBERTO

It seems to bring out the worst in people.

EDEN

Does anyone know why? Is anyone doing anything about it?

Everyone in the room appears to shrink into themselves.

The shopkeeper's bell TINKLES. Pasco Carbone enters the clinic.

Alberto slips out, followed by Mason.

PASCO

Did I interrupt something?

EDEN

Can I help you?

PASCO

I'm looking for Eden Davidson, the new medical director.

(eyes Eden)

Wait a minute. You're the woman who chewed me out about my driving.

EDEN

Eden Davidson, at your service.

PASCO

I'll be damned. I came here to introduce myself. I'd heard you'd arrived. Pasquale Carbone. People around her call me Pasco, even to my face. I run the O-R-E mine.

EDEN

ORE? Really?

PASCO

I don't pick the names. I just dig the metal.

EDEN

What sort of metals?

PASCO

Terbium. Gallium. Tantalum. Rare earths that go into your computers and cell phones. I came to introduce myself and invite you to our monthly breakfast.

EDEN

Breakfast.

PASCO

With local community leaders. We're a good corporate neighbor. We like to stay on our neighbors' good side. Will you come? No hard feelings, about what happened on the road, I mean.

EDEN

I suppose not.

Eden and Pasco shake hands.

PASCO

Friday, then. Seven-thirty sharp.
(touching his cap)
Millie. Ladies.

Pasco exits. Millie's gaze lingers a moment on Pasco.

INT. APARTMENT ABOVE THE CLINIC - DAY

A key CLICKS, turning the lock on the apartment door. Millie leads Eden into the apartment. Eden carries Hypo in his carrier, plus a suitcase. Millie switches on the light.

MILLIE

It's a little dusty, but it's furnished. And convenient. A 30-second commute downstairs to the clinic.

EDEN

Thanks, Millie. Looks great.

MILLIE

I can help unload your car or unpack.

EDEN

I've got it. There's not that much.

MILLIE

Okay. Well...

EDEN

Millie, can I tell you something?

MILLIE

Sure, I suppose.

EDEN

I had a run-in with Mister Carbone,
Pasco, earlier today. On the road
near the mine cutoff.

MILLIE

Oh. Well, I'm sure it was nothing.

EDEN

Another inch closer and he might've
killed me.

MILLIE

I'm sure he didn't mean anything.
He can be a bit impatient. But he's
a good man.

EDEN

Okay. Sounds like you know him
pretty well.

MILLIE

Not that well, but he's someone you
should be careful around. He and
his mine pretty much own Progress.
We owe them everything.

(beat)

Good night. See you in the morning.

Eden closes the door behind Millie. She explores the
kitchenette and the bedroom, placing her suitcase on the bed.
She lets Hypo out of his carrier.

Out the window, she sees Millie hurry off as if to meet
someone.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. EXAM ROOM ONE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

MONTAGE

Eden sees several patients at the clinic:

An ELDERLY WOMAN with a foot problem

A YOUNG MAN with an injured shoulder who needs surgery

A crying TEENAGE GIRL; she might be pregnant

END MONTAGE

INT. APARTMENT ABOVE THE CLINIC - NIGHT

Relaxed in pajamas, Eden eats a take-out dinner on her bed. A cup of tea sits on the end table below the lamp. Hypo keeps watch. Spread before Eden are her laptop and several open patient files.

She makes notes on a pad and enters data into a spreadsheet. She wants to get a sense of the people who come to her clinic.

She starts to clean up and knocks a manila folder on the floor.

Papers fall out. One is printed on letterhead for "Puget Sound Regional Hospital." The title of the letter is "Notice of Disciplinary Termination." It's addressed to Eden.

Eden carefully puts the letter back into its folder, but places it in the end table drawer on top of a .22 caliber pistol.

She lays in bed, staring at the ceiling. Hypo demands attention.

EDEN

Hypo, there's something going on with that road.

She turns off the light.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT./EST. OPPORTUNITY RESOURCE EXPLORERS (O-R-E) - DAY

Even though it's only an hour after sunrise, the day promises to beat 100 degrees. Eden turns onto the cutoff road that leads to the ORE mine, which resembles a refinery.

After a short drive, she pulls up to a shack with a GUARD (42).

EDEN

Eden Davidson, for the breakfast.

GUARD

In the main office. To your right.

Eden parks her car among several. Some have company and government logos. One of the vehicles is a sheriff's department cruiser.

The administrative building resembles a double-wide mobile home with some additional office space. The owners have poured their money into the mine, not worker accommodations.

She goes inside.

INT. O-R-E ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING - DAY

A conference table hosts eight men and women: Eden, Mason, Pasco, GEORGE JOHNSON (35), MYRTLE EDWARDS (65), and CHRIS JACOBS (24), who wears a lab coat.

All are finishing up a simple, catered breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon slices, pancakes, and other traditional fare. Everyone has a paper coffee cup. Eden has an orange juice as well.

The guests represent various community interests whom Pasco wants to keep happy.

Pasco sits at the head of the table. He stands and clears his throat, attempting to get the guests' attention.

PASCO

Good morning, everyone.

Others at the table politely echo his greeting.

PASCO (CONT'D)

It's wonderful to see our friends again. Though frankly, I'm surprised to see George today.

Eyes fall on George, who grins sheepishly.

PASCO (CONT'D)

You'd think with a new baby, he'd have trouble waking up to get here on time.

Everyone laughs.

GEORGE

Gotta open the pharmacy, Pasco. Pills don't distribute themselves.

The room chuckles.

PASCO

And I'm happy to see Myrtle again after so long away. Everything well, I hope?

The group eyes Myrtle with practiced concern.

MYRTLE

The doctors say I'll live another
40 years, give or take.

PASCO

Very good. Now, I'd like to
introduce a new member to our
community.

Eyes turn to Eden.

PASCO (CONT'D)

Eden Davidson is the new medical
director and executive director at
the clinic. Please welcome her.

Polite applause.

PASCO (CONT'D)

Won't you say a few words, Eden?

Polite applause. Eden stands.

EDEN

Well, I didn't prepare a speech.
I've only been here a few days, and
I certainly feel welcomed by
everyone. Thank you.

PASCO

Thank you, Eden.

Eden nods an acknowledgement.

PASCO (CONT'D)

Wait, before you sit, I have
something for you. Would you mind
coming up here with me?

Eden edges behind other guests to stand with Pasco, who pulls
an envelope out of his pocket.

PASCO (CONT'D)

You may not know this, Eden, but
Opportunity Resource Explorers has
built a reputation as a good
corporate neighbor. Every year, we
make a contribution to the free
clinic's operating foundation. I'd
like to present this check for ten
thousand dollars to the clinic on O-
R-E's behalf.

Pasco hands the envelope to Eden, who's surprised by the gift.

EDEN

Thank you, Pasco. Thank you,
everyone.

Enthusiastic applause.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. O-R-E ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING - DAY

The breakfast over, the guests linger near their cars. Eden chats with Myrtle.

In the background, Mason visits with George. Mason glances Eden's way.

MYRTLE

We're so glad you're here, Eden.
The clinic had a heck of a time
finding a doctor.

EDEN

I'm not a doctor.

MYRTLE

Oh? Where did you go to school?

EDEN

University of Washington. Up in
Seattle. Doctor of Nursing Practice
degree.

MYRTLE

Well, I'm sure you'll do fine,
dear, even if you're not a doctor.
See you next time.

Eden turns to Mason.

EDEN

Nice to see you again.

MASON

Congratulations on the gift.

EDEN

Why do I feel like it was a bribe?
Or a payoff?

MASON

An investment. Pasco likes to invest in new friends.

EDEN

So they won't complain when something's amiss?

MASON

You're a cynic. Or maybe you like conspiracy theories.

EDEN

I'm inclined to think there's something going as far as these car accidents are concerned.

MASON

What sort of thing? Boogiemens? Monsters?

EDEN

Haven't a clue. The accidents might be just a statistical blip.

Unseen by either Eden or Mason, Chris Jacobs eavesdrops, though he tries to hide his behavior.

MASON

Probably.

EDEN

By the way, did the state do the work? On the road, I mean.

MASON

Nope. O-R-E paid for it. Their heavy trucks wore out the old road. Bad road slows production. O-R-E hired its own contractor. The state got a free road upgrade.

Mason gets in the cruiser.

MASON (CONT'D)

See you, Eden. S-R 235 is my turf. I have to see who's tearing it up.

Mason drives off. Eden watches him go.

Eden gets in her car.

INT. EDEN'S CAR - DAY

Still in the parking lot, Eden glances at her watch. She clucks and fumbles in her purse for her phone.

CLOSE-IN: Her gun is among the usual paraphernalia of a purse.

She dials Millie.

EDEN

Hi Millie. Yeah. I'm running a little late this morning. You're on your way? Okay.

Pasco catches her eye and waves. She acknowledges, but only out of courtesy.

EDEN (CONT'D)

I have to stop at the market. I'll be at work in a half-hour. Bye.

EXT. O-R-E ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING - DAY

Eden exits the parking lot and passes the guard shack.

EXT. OPPORTUNITY RESOURCE EXPLORERS (O-R-E) - DAY

The mine's processing buildings recede in Eden's rear view mirror.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - DAY

Eden's at the speed limit on the highway. She's a little nervous, but the following and oncoming cars and trucks all behave normally.

EXT. BIG BOX STORE - DAY

As she approaches downtown Progress, she turns into the parking lot of a big box store, which has a grocery.

She goes inside. It's not terribly busy, except for the line at the major brand coffee kiosk.

INT. BIG BOX STORE - DAY

Eden shops for a few food items: fruit, packaged lunches, packaged dinners. She also picks out a box of fresh donuts from the bakery.

EDEN
(to herself)
Best way to get co-workers to like
you.

She pays at the checkout.

She nears the coffee kiosk, hesitates a moment, then gets in line. A moment later, she orders a grande latte. As the barista prepares the drink, she engages a FEMALE CUSTOMER.

EDEN (CONT'D)
I had two cups at breakfast, but I
guess it wasn't enough.

The Female Customer barely reacts.

The barista hands Eden the grande.

EXT. BIG BOX STORE - DAY

Eden arrives at her car, puts the grande on the roof, and gets in. She almost forgets the grande on her roof before she drives off.

As she maneuvers toward the exit, an enormous black pickup appears in her rear-view mirror. Eden thinks nothing of it, until it creeps nearer and nearer.

Eden stops at the exit before entering traffic. The truck, with its turbo-charged DIESEL, almost kisses her bumper. It's a customized monster: huge tires, lifted suspension, smoked windows, little to no chrome. Eden suppresses her feelings of intimidation.

CLOSE-IN: Her hand edges toward her purse with its gun.

She wants to get away. The traffic is light and she turns onto SR 235, accelerating toward town.

She loses sight of the truck.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - DAY

Eden passes a sign saying "Speed 35". As Eden moves along, another car zooms up to her rear bumper.

For a brief moment, it tailgates her, then pulls into the oncoming lane and blows past.

The road curves behind a building and some trees, and Eden loses sight of the speeding muscle car.

A siren and lights catch her attention. She pulls over to the shoulder and a cruiser speeds by.

EDEN
(to no one)
Mason.

Mason's cruiser goes behind the trees and building.

Eden pulls onto the road. When she clears the building, she sees the muscle car in a ditch.

Mason's cruiser, its lights still flashing, is parked nearby. Police RADIO traffic comes out of the cruiser's open door.

Eden stops and gets out. She goes to her trunk, opens it, and pulls out a professional first aid kit.

Mason stands away from the driver's side, but leans forward. Screams come out of the car. It's the DRIVER (22).

MASON
Calm down, sir. Calm down. I'm here
to help you.

DRIVER
(screaming)
I'll kill you! I'll kill you!

Eden comes around. The airbag is deployed. The Driver appears unhurt, but the car is badly damaged.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
I'm sick of you people. I'll take
your head off.

The Driver tries to open the door, but it's jammed shut. The glass has shattered.

Mason sees Eden. He's frightened.

MASON
(to Eden)
Keep back.

The Driver issues a blood-curdling growl. He pulls himself out the window.

Mason unsnaps his holster. Now Eden is frightened.

MASON (CONT'D)
Keep your hands visible, sir.

EDEN
(to the Driver)
I'm a nurse, sir. Are you hurt? Are you in pain?

The Driver is momentarily confused. Whom should he attack?

DRIVER
You're both going to die.

Mason pulls his weapon.

EDEN
No, don't shoot him.

Mason is distracted. The Driver chooses that moment to lunge for Mason's gun. They struggle and both fall to the stony ground.

The gun comes loose. Eden is too far away to grab it. Both men jump at it. The Driver touches it but Mason edge him away.

Bloodied, Mason gets underneath the raving man and throws him. The officer then gets him into a hold, but it's not tight enough, and the Driver nearly frees himself.

Eden plows into the Driver like a linebacker, knocking him down. The Driver is stunned. So is Eden. She's near Mason's gun, and she pushes it away. Mason pulls the Driver's hands around his back.

The Driver recovers, but he's immobilized. Breathing hard, Mason finds his weapon. Eden edges closer to the Driver.

MASON
Stay away from him. He's like an animal.

Eden ignores Mason. The Driver moans, semi-conscious.

EDEN
(to the Driver)
Let me help you. I'm a nurse at the clinic.

Breathing as if he'd run a marathon, the Driver calms a little.

Eden does a cursory exam on the Driver.

EDEN (CONT'D)
Call an ambulance, Mason. I think there might be some internal injuries. I can't handle this at the clinic.

MASON
(into his radio)
Base Two. This is Delta Two-Four. I need an ambulance at SR 235. Mile Post 23. Another accident. One victim.

LATER

Two ATTENDANTS load the Driver into the ambulance. He's calm, but strapped down.

MASON (CONT'D)
That was just crazy.

Eden is cleaning a wound on Mason's face.

EDEN
I used to see that kind of thing in the E-R. But this was different.

MASON
I almost shot him.

EDEN
This is a nasty cut. You'll need a couple of stiches.

MASON
I almost shot him. I've never shot anyone.

EDEN
But you didn't shoot him.

MASON
He would've killed me. If you hadn't come along...

EDEN
Come on, let's finish this up at the clinic.

INT. MASON'S SHERIFF CRUISER - DAY

Mason drives toward town. In his rear-view mirror, he sees Eden following in her blue sedan.

INT. EDEN'S CAR - DAY

Eden follows Mason's cruiser into downtown Progress.

EXT. WHITMAN COUNTY FREE CLINIC - DAY

The two vehicles park next to each other.

Mason, pale and worn, waits by the clinic door for Eden.

Eden exits her car, starts to close the car door, then opens it back up. She forgot the donuts. She grabs the plastic package.

INT. WAITING ROOM AT THE CLINIC - DAY

The shopkeeper's BELL announces Eden and Mason's arrival. The waiting area is empty. Millie is at the reception desk.

MILLIE

Eden! Where have you been? We were worried about you.

Rhonda and Jane show their faces. Millie notices Mason's injury.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

What happened to Mason?

EDEN

Another accident on 235. Is Exam One open?

MILLIE

Yes. Do you need help?

EDEN

No, I got this one. Here.

Eden hands the donuts to Millie.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Enjoy. I got them on sale.

Surprised by the gift, Millie accepts the pastries.

INT. EXAM ROOM ONE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden pulls a small suture kit from a drawer. She also finds a hypodermic and painkiller.

EDEN

Take off your shirt.

Mason does as he's told. There's blood on his uniform shirt. He sits on the exam table, watching Eden carefully, impressed.

MASON

We have to stop meeting like this.

Smiling, Eden opens an antiseptic wipe and cleans around Mason's wound.

She draws the local anesthetic from the vial. She has to move closer to Mason to inject it near the wound.

EDEN

You might feel a little stick.

Mason likes her closeness.

With the needle and nylon suture, Eden starts to close the wound.

MASON

Why'd you push my gun away?

EDEN

I avoid them, if I can. I saw what they do to people. Back when I was in the E-R.

MASON

My dad taught me to shoot. The army taught me to kill. And when. Maybe that's why I didn't shoot.

EDEN

My first boyfriend taught me about guns. Out behind the equipment shed on his dad's farm.

Eden smiles at her memory. Mason understands and grins.

She finishes with the stitches, three in total. She tears open an adhesive bandage and places it over the wound.

EDEN (CONT'D)

All done. Come back in three or four days and I'll take out the stitches.

Mason dons his bloodied shirt.

MASON

I don't want to wait that long.

EDEN

I'm sorry?

MASON

My shift is just about done. I have to change out of this shirt. What do you say to lunch? Next door at noon.

Eden likes the idea.

EDEN

Okay.

INT. WAITING ROOM AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Mason leads the way through the waiting room. Eden is behind him. He peers into the administrative area beyond the counter.

MASON

See you later, ladies.

Millie and her co-workers look up. They have confectioner's sugar from the donuts on their lips and fingers.

INT. THE DINER - DAY

Mason waits in a booth at The Squeeze Inn. The diner has kept its mid-20th century look, but not because the owner is a hipster restaurateur. Seventies rock and roll MUSIC plays in the background.

Eden comes in, triggering the door's electronic welcome TONE.

Mason's been waiting awhile. He's in civilian clothes: jeans, a t-shirt showing off his buff figure, and a ball cap. His coffee cup has a few dregs.

EDEN

Sorry I'm late. It got suddenly busy after you left.

MASON

No problem. Occupational hazard.
With cops. And nurses, I guess.

A WAITRESS (41) visits the table. She has a carafe of coffee.

WAITRESS

(to Eden)

Afternoon. Coffee?

EDEN

Just water, please. Could I get a
bowl of soup and an avocado
sandwich?

WAITRESS

Split pea okay?

(to Mason, referring to
his cup)

Refill?

MASON

Sure. I'll have the soup and tuna
salad.

WAITRESS

(refilling Mason's cup)

Back in a sec.

MASON

Thanks for taking care of me this
morning.

EDEN

My pleasure.

MASON

Why'd you come out here, if you
don't mind my asking.

EDEN

I don't mind. I'd expect our local
police to check up on the newbies.

MASON

Except you're not a newbie.

The Waitress returns with the food for Eden and Mason.

EDEN

You've come prepared for an
interrogation.

MASON

I'll admit I did a cursory background check. You grew up in the area. Went to high school here. Went off to college. Didn't come back, until three days ago. Forgive me my curiosity.

EDEN

Forgive me if I plead the Fifth for now. I don't know you that well. What about you? I don't remember you from my childhood.

MASON

I'm local too, but went to Whitman City schools. Joined the army. A tour in Afghanistan. Came back in one piece.

EDEN

Body and mind?

MASON

Now you're prying.

EDEN

I care about the health of all my patients. Just like I care about this problem with that highway.

MASON

Is something amiss?

EDEN

I spent some time going over the clinic's records. Just routine, getting to know the clientele. I noticed something odd. A lot of broken bones, lacerations, some serious injuries. Vehicle crashes.

MASON

All on SR 235?

EDEN

The notes aren't always clear. But I can trace a trend to about three years ago.

MASON

That's about when the road was repaved from Progress to the interstate.

EDEN

Before the repaving, the trauma cases are about what you'd expect for the population. But after, it goes whoosh!

Eden gestures, as if imitating a rocket.

MASON

I told you the road was accident prone.

EDEN

Mason, there's something going on with that road. We need to figure it out.

MASON

We?

The Waitress leaves the check on the table.

EDEN

You said it was your turf. Don't you care what happens on your turf?

MASON

Only if there's something actually happening. You haven't told me what that is.

EDEN

That's because I don't know. But I mean to find out.

Mason puts a few bills on the table.

EDEN (CONT'D)

I should cover my share.

MASON

It's part of my thank-you.

EDEN

My treat next time.

MASON

You're on.

Eden watches him leave.

INT. WAITING ROOM AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Evening light signals the end of the day. Eden gathers the old magazines and arranges them in anticipation of the next day's patients.

Millie puts on a jacket.

MILLIE
Good night, Eden.

EDEN
Good night, Millie.

MILLIE
I wanted to ask, how things are going? With the clinic. The job.

EDEN
Thanks for asking. Well, I think.

MILLIE
Good. We're all so glad you're here.

Millie exits the front door. Eden locks up as golden light filters in.

INT. HALLWAY AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden walks down the hall to a door, which opens onto stairs going up.

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

She collects some papers and her laptop.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Keys JINGLING, Eden exits the stairs to a hallway with storage rooms on either side. She stops at her apartment door and unlocks it.

INT. APARTMENT ABOVE THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden enters and drops her keys on the table, as well as a sheaf of papers and her laptop. Hypo greets her. She looks at her watch and sighs. She meant to make a call.

She shuffles through her papers and finds a number on a letter on O-R-E letterhead.

She dials.

INT. O-R-E ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING - NIGHT

Chris Jacobs, whom Eden met at the monthly breakfast, sits at his desk working on a document.

The phone rings, but it's after hours. He lets it go to voice mail.

He hears Eden's voice.

EDEN (O.S.)
Hello, this is Eden Davidson, at the Free Clinic? I was hoping to catch someone, even though it's late. Could you have your person in charge of safety records call me? I'm doing some research-

Chris picks up the phone.

CHRIS
Hello?

INT. APARTMENT ABOVE THE CLINIC - NIGHT

EDEN
Hello?

BEGIN INTERCUT OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN EDEN AND CHRIS

CHRIS
Eden Davidson?

EDEN
Who's this?

CHRIS
It's Chris Jacobs. I was at the breakfast. I didn't get a chance to say hello.

EDEN
Okay.

CHRIS
I was the guy in the lab coat.

EDEN

Oh, yes. I remember. Sorry we didn't get a chance to chat.

CHRIS

It's alright. I heard your call come in. I'm working late. Is there something I can help you with?

EDEN

I was going to ask for the company's injury reports, the publicly available ones.

CHRIS

You'd have to ask the security team. They're the ones who maintain those records.

EDEN

Who would that be?

CHRIS

Pasco would be the one to ask.

EDEN

Okay. Could you leave him a message? Or should I call back?

CHRIS

I might be able to help. With the records.

EDEN

Okay. Chris, are you okay? You sound a little nervous.

CHRIS

What? No, I'm fine. I'll leave a message for Pasco. What's your number?

Chris listens and makes a note.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Got it. Good night.

END INTERCUT

INT. APARTMENT ABOVE THE CLINIC - NIGHT

Eden looks at her phone, puzzled at the odd conversation.

INT. O-R-E ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING - NIGHT

Chris sets down the phone. He's trying to make a decision. He turns to his computer screen.

CLOSE-IN. Chris's POV.

The open document on his computer is titled "Letter of Resignation." He clicks the "X" in the word processor's upper right.

The application asks, "Save? Don't Save? Cancel?" He clicks "Don't Save." The letter vanishes.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. WAITING ROOM AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden walks into the front office area with a steaming coffee. She hears BEEPS and faint recorded human VOICES. Millie is already at the reception counter. She's listening to overnight voice mails and making notes.

EDEN

Good morning. Anything urgent?

MILLIE

Nothing so far.

Millie punches a key on the reception phone.

FEMALE CALLER VOICE

Hello. This is Marjorie again. I really need to make an appointment-

Millie punches a key.

ARTIFICIAL PHONE VOICE

Message deleted.

EDEN

Don't you want the phone number?

MILLIE

That's her third overnight message. She calls every night.

Eden mouths a silent "Oh."

Millie touches a key on the phone.

MALE CALLER VOICE #1
 Listen, I know what you people do
 there. People are sick of it.
 People-

Millie touches a key.

ARTIFICIAL PHONE VOICE
 Message deleted.

EDEN
 Another frequent caller?

MILLIE
 Mmm-hmm.

Millie touches a phone key.

MALE CALLER VOICE #2
 (distorted)
 This is for Eden Davidson. I know
 what happened at the hospital. Your
 old job. You hid it from the
 clinic. Don't think you can just
 run away. If you're not out of town
 by tomorrow, I'll-

Eden reaches down and punches the key on the phone that
 deletes a message.

ARTIFICIAL PHONE VOICE
 Message deleted.

Millie gawks at Eden.

MILLIE
 What was that?

Eden leaves the waiting area.

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden sits at her desk. Hypo is on the desk, keeping her
 company.

Millie stands at the door.

MILLIE
 You'd better tell me what that was
 about. Somebody might ask me.

Eden considers for a moment.

EDEN
It's personal.

MILLIE
Everything in a small town is
personal.

EDEN
Okay. It's not easy to talk about.
I was working in the E-R. I'd
finished a double-shift.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LARGE CITY HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The story unfolds like a dream. Fuzzy, disjointed. It's 2
a.m. An exhausted Eden walks to her car, the only car in the
lot. She fumbles for her keys in her purse.

A MAN IN A HOODY approaches.

MAN IN A HOODY
I want your money.

EDEN
(surprised)
Shit.

MAN IN A HOODY
(hand out, as if begging)
Come on. Come on.

EDEN
Are you sick? I can take you to the
E-R.

MAN IN A HOODY
(getting angry)
Give me your purse.

EDEN
I can help.

MAN IN A HOODY
Damn it.

The desperate Hoody Man grabs at the purse. The purse spills
its contents onto the pavement. Among the items is a bottle
of pills and a gun. She and the Hoody Man struggle over both.
The gun goes off. Hoody Man drops to the ground.

Eden runs.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden finishes her story.

EDEN

The man died. There was an investigation, of course. The cops didn't charge me with anything.

MILLIE

You were defending yourself.

EDEN

Thing is, the cops asked about the pills. Anti-anxiety meds. I didn't have a prescription.

MILLIE

Oh, dear.

EDEN

They came from the hospital. They fired me.

MILLIE

Did the county know about this before they hired you for this job?

EDEN

Yes. The hiring committee asked me about it. I told them the truth. I was burned out. The stress was just... I did a stupid thing, and I was sorry for it.

MILLIE

But they hired you anyway.

EDEN

The incident was two years ago. I hadn't worked since. And I guess no one else they considered qualified applied for the job.

(beat)

This is the only chance I have to make up for a stupid mistake. If this doesn't work out, I'll be bussing tables at the Squeeze Inn.

Millie pauses a beat.

MILLIE
Thanks for letting me know.

Millie departs.

Eden contemplates what her life might have been like if she hadn't stolen those pills.

Her personal cell phone RINGS. The number is labeled "Unknown."

EDEN
This is Eden.

CHRIS (O.S.)
It's Chris Jacobs. From the mine.

EDEN
Chris.
(beat)
Is everything okay?

CHRIS (O.S.)
I'd like to meet with you. Tonight.

EDEN
Is something wrong? Are you in trouble?

CHRIS (O.S.)
No. I mean, can you be at the truck stop where Langley Road meets SR 235?

EDEN
I can find it.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Good. Midnight then.

Eden's phone BEEPS, signaling the end of the call.

INT. HALLWAY AT THE CLINIC - NIGHT

Millie listens to the conversation. She tiptoes away.

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - NIGHT

Hypo nuzzles Eden.

EDEN

I don't think he wants a
vaccination, Hypo. No, he doesn't.

CUT TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED TRUCK STOP ON LANGLEY ROAD - NIGHT

A streetlamp marks the intersection of Langley Road and SR 235. A huge parking lot sits on one corner. Eden's sedan pulls into the lot, her headlights falling on stubs of concrete marking old lampposts with broken lamps.

INT. EDEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Eden sees no other cars. She creeps toward an empty storefront, once a building for servicing long-gone truck drivers. Apart from the streetlamp at the intersection, nothing but the moon and stars illuminate the scene.

Eden parks her car at the building, headlights left on.

Her watch says 12:10. She lays her hand on her purse, reassuring herself.

She steps out of the car. No traffic on the road. No sound except NIGHT INSECTS.

EDEN

(voice slightly raised)
Chris? Chris Jacobs?

Her voices ECHOES.

She turns away from the building.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Chris! It's Eden.

A beat.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Chri-

CHRIS

I'm here.

Eden startles. Chris is behind her. Instinctively, she reaches for her gun, but she's left it in her purse, which is in the car.

EDEN

Oh, lord.

CHRIS

You're late.

EDEN

I didn't realize how far away this place is from everything. I didn't see your car.

CHRIS

It's behind the building. I wanted to watch you come in. See if you were followed.

EDEN

Followed? Who would follow me?

CHRIS

Turn your lights off.

Chris heads toward the dead building. Eden does as she's asked.

Entering the building, Chris flashes a light for a second to find his way. In the dimness, he bends down. A camping lamp comes on.

Eden comes near.

EDEN

Chris, what's this about?

CHRIS

I'm sorry. I had to make sure I could talk with you in private. I had to make sure you'd come.

EDEN

I'm here. Tell me what's got you scared.

CHRIS

Your call earlier. You wanted to talk to someone about safety records.

EDEN

Yes. I'm doing some research.

CHRIS

You won't find anything in them. Nothing about the road.

EDEN
(glancing at SR 235)
You mean the highway?

CHRIS
I overheard you talking with Deputy
Ruiz about accidents.

EDEN
Chris, what is it?

CHRIS
I've been wondering if anyone would
notice. I thought the cops might
start asking questions. But no one
has.

EDEN
What sort of questions?

CHRIS
Why that road has so many
accidents? And why does it seem to
involve road rage?

Automobile headlights flash by. Chris jumps, but the lights
fade. It's just a car driving by on the highway.

EDEN
Chris, what do you know? What can
you tell me?

CHRIS
It's the road.

EDEN
I know it has something to do with
the road. But what?

Another flash of headlights. Chris is frightened.

CHRIS
Just look at the road. I've got to
go.

He douses the lamp and takes off through a back door.

EDEN
Chris!

CHRIS
The road! The road!

A car's engine starts, lights come on. Eden dashes into the parking lot. A car emerges from behind the building and races to the lot's exit. In a second, it's gone.

Eden is left alone in the dark.

INT. EDEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Frustrated, Eden starts her car and gets on SR 325. As she drives, thinking about Chris' admonition, she focuses on the road: the two lanes, the yellow dividing stripes, the solid white line on the verge.

Eden eases onto the shoulder and stops. She leaves her lights on.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - NIGHT

Getting out of her car, Eden goes to the road's edge, illuminated by the headlights. She drops to her haunches.

CLOSE-IN: Eden touches the road surface by the white stripe.

Eden rises to her feet and goes to the trunk of her car.

Apart from the professional first aid kit, there's a spare tire, a few tools, and a cardboard box. The box is full of medical odds and ends, including specimen bottles. She grabs one.

Rummaging further, she finds a pair of tweezers.

She closes the trunk and returns to the spot in front of her car.

Lowering herself to the pavement, she scrapes at the surface with the tweezers. She picks up a few scrapings and paint chips. She places them in the specimen bottle and SNAPS it shut.

Returning to her car, she finds a black marker in her purse. On the bottle, she writes "5/24, 1 a.m., SR 235".

Red and blue flashing lights startle her.

A sheriff's cruiser parks behind her car.

Mason Ruiz exits the patrol car, puts on his uniform cap, and turns on his flashlight. The beam shines in Eden's face. She grimaces at the bright light.

Mason lowers the light and approaches.

MASON

Eden! Are you okay?

EDEN

Fancy meeting you here. Were you following me?

MASON

Why would I follow you? I just started my shift.

EDEN

Never mind. I, erm, couldn't sleep. I had a thought about those accidents.

MASON

You're becoming obsessed.

EDEN

Maybe. Do you know anyone at the state crime lab?

MASON

Actually, yeah.

EDEN

Could you do me a favor and send this to your friend and ask for a spectrographic analysis?

Eden hands Mason the specimen bottle.

MASON

I don't know them that well. Their services are for crime investigations, not public health problems.

EDEN

It's a sample of the road surface. There's something about it that's connected to all these road rage incidents. I'd say that's something like a criminal investigation.

MASON

And just how did you come to that conclusion?

EDEN

Call it a hunch.

Mason takes the bottle.

MASON
Sure, Detective Davidson.

EDEN
May I go now, officer?

Without waiting for Mason's permission, Eden climbs into her car and departs.

Mason waits until she's out of sight. He studies the labeled bottle and the flecks and chips at the bottom.

He tosses the bottle into the dirt on the shoulder.

Mason returns to his cruiser and drives away.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden works at her laptop.

MILLIE
This came for you.

Millie hands Eden a 10x13 manila envelope, thick with paper. The envelope is addressed to, "Eden Davidson, Whitman County Free Clinic."

EDEN
No return address. No shipping label. How did we get this?

MILLIE
A kid said a man gave her \$20 to deliver it.

EDEN
You didn't see him?

Millie shakes her head no. Eden starts to open the envelope.

MILLIE
Maybe you shouldn't open it.

EDEN
Are you afraid it's a letter bomb?

Millie has a sheepish look. Eden peers inside, then looks at Millie.

EDEN (CONT'D)
May I have some privacy?

MILLIE
Sorry.

Millie closes the door behind her.

Eden removes the documents. She thumbs through them. Many have the ORE logo. Most are marked "Confidential."

Eden finds one titled, "Results of Environmental Exposure on the Limbic Systems of Mice and Rabbits."

Eden begins to read. Her interest intensifies. She pages through the reams of data and studies the graphs, which show an upward trend.

EDEN
(to herself, as she reads)
Jesus Christ.

Eden dials a number on the clinic phone.

EDEN (CONT'D)
(while reading)
Yes. Hello. I'm calling for Chris Jacobs.
(beat)
He didn't come in? Do you know why?
(beat)
I'm sorry. This is Eden Davidson, at the clinic. We, erm, we were expecting him, and when he didn't show...
(beat)
Yes. Let him know I called? Yes, I'll ask him to call you. Thank you. Goodbye.

Eden puts down the phone. After a beat, she takes out her personal cell phone and dials.

Mason answers.

MASON (O.S.)
Hello-

EDEN
Mason, it's Eden.

MASON (O.S.)
-you've reached Deputy Mason Ruiz
of the Whitman County Sheriff's
Department--

EDEN
(impatient)
Dammit.

MASON (O.S.)
I'm unable to take your call right
now. Please leave a message with
your name and telephone number, and
I'll call you back.

Mason's voice mail BEEPS.

EDEN
(excited)
Mason, it's Eden. I need to talk to
you as soon as possible. Can you
come to the clinic today? It's
about the mine. And did you hear
anything from the crime lab about
those samples I gave you? Call me
soon. Thanks.

Eden rings off. Her phone DINGS.

MASON (TEXT)
I'm at the precinct. I'm stuck here
with paperwork.

Eden is unimpressed. She gathers the papers.

INT. WAITING ROOM AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Millie is typing at her computer. A few people wait for
service. Eden walks in.

EDEN
Millie, take over my appointments.
I've got an urgent meeting.

Millie watches her leave. She picks up the phone and dials.

EXT. WHITMAN COUNTY FREE CLINIC - DAY

Eden gets in her car with the manila folder and her purse.
She takes off down Main Street. She's impatient.

EXT. WHITMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, PRECINCT 3 - DAY

Eden parks in front of the precinct building. She almost gets out of the car. She stops herself. Her gun is in her purse. She puts her purse in her trunk.

INT. WHITMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, PRECINCT 3 - DAY

Eden finds herself in a secure vestibule with a check-in window. A FEMALE DEPUTY greets her.

EDEN

I'm Eden Davidson. I run the Free
Clinic. I'm here to see Deputy
Ruiz.

The Female Deputy picks up the phone. She's calling Mason.

Eden paces in the vestibule.

Mason is visible beyond the security equipment.

The entrance door lock releases with a CLICK and BUZZ. Eden empties her pockets. The Female Deputy wands her. Eden is clear.

MASON

There's an interview room over
here.

Mason leads her into a small room with a table and a few chairs.

INTERVIEW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MASON (CONT'D)

Couldn't this wait?

Eden drops the envelope in front of Mason.

EDEN

No, it couldn't. Take a look.

Mason removes the papers.

MASON

These are marked confidential.
Where'd you get these?

EDEN

That's not important.

MASON

It's important if they're stolen.

EDEN

Just look at them, will you?

MASON

(sighs)

Looks like some lab reports. A copy of a business plan. What is this?

EDEN

A smoking gun.

MASON

What?

EDEN

The O-R-E lab does routine toxicity studies on animals. It's part of the safety protocol. They tested a new product derived from mine tailings. They used a mouse model. The product is supposed to make roads last longer.

MASON

Okay. What's the headline?

EDEN

The mice became aggressive. The higher the exposure, the more aggression.

MASON

So this product is bad for mice, I guess.

EDEN

The mice were fighting like, well, dogs. Some of them even killed other mice.

MASON

Really bad for mice, then. You're not making any sense, Eden.

EDEN

What if O-R-E put some of that product on the highway? As a test, maybe. What if it's affecting people who drive on it, frequently, like back and forth to work, or something.

MASON

You're saying O-R-E deliberately put a poisonous product on a public road to get people to kill each other?

EDEN

I don't know why they did it. But we can prove something's there with those samples I gave you. Did you get anything back? It's been weeks.

MASON

(hesitates)

I don't think we'll get any results.

EDEN

Why not?

MASON

The samples. I got rid of them.

EDEN

You what?

MASON

I can't just send shit to the state crime lab because a nurse thinks there's something fishy going on. Not a good look.

EDEN

Jesus Christ. You're covering for them. For O-R-E. For Pasco.

MASON

I don't just write traffic tickets, Eden. Part of my job is to protect the community. That mine is everything to Progress. Before it opened, the town was this close to drying up and blowing away. Now it has a future. You're expecting me to act on your guesses, which could wreck a lot of lives. Give me some real facts. Then maybe, just maybe, I'll believe something's actually wrong.

EDEN

What's wrong is sitting on that road out there. My job is to protect this community's health.

(MORE)

EDEN (CONT'D)

What's more important to you? Your health? Or that mine's business plan?

MASON

I'd like to keep my job.

EDEN

You mean you won't risk your reputation on me.

Mason folds his arms. Eden gathers up the papers.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Fine then. I'll find some other way. O-R-E is poisoning this town. I just hope no one dies because of it.

Eden departs.

EXT. WHITMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, PRECINCT 3 - DAY

In her blue sedan, Eden exits the precinct lot.

She glances in the rear view mirror. The huge black tricked-out pickup comes up on her rear. It's LED lights flash. Eden feels for her purse, but it's in the trunk.

EDEN

Shit.

Eden eases over, while the truck zooms past on her left. She breathes out.

EXT. A BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

A red truck is parked in the lot next to an empty baseball field, part of an athletic complex on the edge of town.

Pasco waits in one of the dugouts, hidden from view.

Millie arrives.

PASCO

You took your time.

MILLIE

I'm sorry. I had to wait until Rhonda could take the front desk.

PASCO
Just tell me what you know.

MILLIE
There's no reason to be rude. I'm
doing my best for you.

PASCO
I've told you before. I don't want
to be seen with you.

MILLIE
There's no reason to be hurtful.

PASCO
(moderately sincere)
I apologize. I like your company,
but we have to be careful. People
talk.

MILLIE
Eden is asking a lot of questions.

PASCO
I'm aware of that.

MILLIE
She's going to figure out what the
company did.

PASCO
She's just speculating. She has no
facts.

MILLIE
Someone in the company sent her the
lab reports. I saw those reports
before I quit.

PASCO
You're not going to rat on me, are
you?

MILLIE
Of course not.
(beat)
I love you, Pasco. I've loved you
since high school. I couldn't hurt
you.

Pasco thinks a bit. He smiles.

PASCO

I remember the day we met. At the party, after we beat the Wolverines, 24 to 17. What a game. In Whitman City. Remember that?

MILLIE

Like it was yesterday.

Pasco loses his smile.

PASCO

Who leaked the reports to Eden.

MILLIE

Eden got a packet of documents. She asked me to leave, but I hung around, out of sight. I heard her call the company, ask for Chris Jacobs.

PASCO

The lab tech.

MILLIE

Two and two equal four.

(beat)

You're not going to hurt him, are you?

PASCO

I'm not a violent man, Millie. You know that.

Pasco turns to Millie.

PASCO (CONT'D)

But there have to be consequences. I don't take kindly to betrayal.

Millie grasps his meaning.

MILLIE

I'm yours, Pasco. I really am.

Pasco strokes Millie's cheek. She revels in his touch.

PASCO

Millie.

MILLIE

Yes?

PASCO

Eden Davidson is a threat. To O-R-E. And to me. I may need your help.

He rises, gets in his truck, and departs.

Millie will do anything for him.

INT. EDEN'S CAR - DAY

The sign for the O-R-E mine comes up. Eden passes it, makes a decision, and slows to a stop.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - DAY

Eden turns around and heads back to the mine site entrance. She turns onto the access road and heads toward the mine.

EXT. O-R-E ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING - DAY

Eden parks in the lot. Pasco's red truck is parked in a reserved space.

INT. O-R-E ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING - DAY

Eden goes up to the reception counter. The chair at the desk behind it is empty. She looks around and catches the eye of Chris Jacobs, but he pretends not to see her.

Pasco comes in from another entrance with the RECEPTIONIST, who sees Eden at the counter.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you?

PASCO

Eden! A pleasant surprise.
Something we can do for you?

EDEN

Maybe. Could we talk in your office?

The Receptionist opens a gate. Eden steps through. She follows Pasco into his office.

They walk past Chris, who struggles to keep his eyes off Eden. He's fearful of discovery.

PASCO'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pasco closes the door behind himself after he lets Eden through. He sits at his desk and invites Eden to take a seat.

PASCO

A problem at the clinic? I'm happy to help any way I can.

EDEN

I want to find out a little more about the mine.

PASCO

I can arrange a tour, if that's what you mean.

EDEN

You do more than mine rare earths.

PASCO

You've been reading up on us. I like that. Yes, we have an active research team developing new products. Mostly for the construction industry.

EDEN

What sort of safety testing do you do?

PASCO

Safety testing? In what respect?

EDEN

I'm curious if you do any animal modeling.

PASCO

What's this about, Eden?

EDEN

It's professional curiosity.

PASCO

Well, let me bring in the expert.

Pasco rises from his desk and opens the door.

PASCO (CONT'D)

Chris, can you step in my office for a second.

Chris edges his way into Pasco's office, which is suddenly crowded.

PASCO (CONT'D)

Eden, this is Chris Jacobs. He's part of the lab team. Chris, this is Eden Davidson. She runs the Free Clinic. She's interested in our product research, specifically, erm...

E DEN

Animal models. Do you use them for safety research?

Chris is uncertain.

PASCO

Speak up, man.

CHRIS

Yes, we use animal models. Mice, specifically.

E DEN

I'm wondering what you do when you find results that don't meet safety standards, that might be unsafe for humans.

Pasco and Chris's gazes meet.

CHRIS

Well, honestly, that's for someone else to decide. I just report results.

PASCO

Chris is correct. I work with the board of directors to make those kinds of decision. Of course, human safety is paramount.

E DEN

Of course, it is.

PASCO

That's all, Chris.

Chris departs, closing the door behind him.

He sits at his desk, shaking with fear.

PASCO (CONT'D)

You'd better tell me now what this about, Eden. I don't like beating around the bush.

EDEN

I think you may already know. Your company paid to have SR 235 repaved. I think you put an untested product, or more likely, a product you know to be dangerous to human health, in that road. It affects their brains, making them angry and vengeful. It's causing a spike in road rage incidents. People are getting hurt because of it.

PASCO

(laughs)

I've heard a lot of crazy things in my life, Eden. But that one wins a prize.

EDEN

I have evidence.

PASCO

What kind of evidence?

EDEN

I'm sorry. I can't say. But I'm confident of my source. I was hoping to persuade you to admit a mistake and make good on it.

PASCO

(with menace)

I think you'd better leave.

Eden gathers herself.

PASCO (CONT'D)

Before you go, let me offer an observation. Even if you decide to report what you've found, the chances you'll be taken seriously aren't that good.

EDEN

What does that mean?

PASCO

Your background is well, problematic.

EDEN

You mean you heard some gossip.

PASCO

I know about the shooting. And your firing. It wasn't the first time you were caught with meds you shouldn't have had. If that came out, you'd have no credibility, Eden. No one would believe a word you say.

Eden stares at Pasco. She departs Pasco's office, walking past Chris.

Pasco takes out his cell phone and makes a call.

INT. APARTMENT ABOVE THE CLINIC - NIGHT

Eden comes home. She tosses the envelope with the lab report on the kitchen table, along with her keys, purse and phone.

In the bathroom, she takes a pill bottle from the medicine cabinet. On the label is the instruction, "For anxiety."

She falls into bed, exhausted. Hypo tucks her in, metaphorically. Hypo PURRS.

In a moment, Eden is asleep.

INT. HALLWAY AT THE CLINIC - NIGHT

In the second floor hallway, a figure in black, a mask hiding its face, splashes a liquid along the wall.

The figure strikes a match and sets the liquid aflame.

The figure runs down the stairs to the first floor.

INT. APARTMENT ABOVE THE CLINIC - NIGHT

Eden dreams of the parking lot outside the hospital where she once worked. She replays the attempted robbery and the assault. The robber is shot.

Police lights and SIRENS fill her dream space. A Whitman County Sheriff's department cruiser pulls up. Pasco runs to her.

PASCO

No one will believe you, Eden. No one will believe you.

More lights and SIRENS. The noise is deafening.

Eden starts to cough.

She wakes up to the SCREECHING of a fire alarm. The air is filled with smoke. Hypo is mewling next to her.

Eden scoops up Hypo and moves quickly through the kitchen, coughing. Red and blue lights from police cars and fire trucks shine through the windows.

Hypo crawls up on Eden's shoulders. Her hands free, she grabs her purse and her phone. Just as she's about to leave, she reaches for the envelope of O-R-E lab reports.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY AT THE CLINIC - NIGHT

Coughing hard, Eden stumbles through the thick haze. She finds the stairs to the clinic and crawls down through the black.

INT. HALLWAY AT THE CLINIC - NIGHT

Eden gropes through the pitch black. ALARMS blare.

Strobes flash.

Coughs rack her lungs.

A dim light shines ahead of her.

EDEN

I'm here!

A dark shape looms. It's Mason. He's coughing as well.

MASON

Is anyone else in the building?

Coughing and sputtering, Eden shakes her head no. Hypo clings to her shirt.

A FIREFIGHTER in full gear, including oxygen mask, meets Eden and Mason in the hallway. He pushes them through the hallway into the waiting room.

EXT. WHITMAN COUNTY FREE CLINIC - NIGHT

Eden exits, followed by Mason, followed by the Firefighter.

More first RESPONDERS lead Eden to an ambulance. A Responder puts an oxygen mask over her mouth and an emergency blanket over her shoulders.

EDEN

Where's Hypo? Where is he?

A Responder fits a small mask on an unconscious Hypo, who revives. The Responder gives Hypo to Eden, who hugs the cat as if it were her child.

The clinic's second floor burns.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WHITMAN COUNTY FREE CLINIC - DAY

Firefighters clean up around the smoking ruins.

A disheveled, smoke-stained Eden sits on a salvaged chair, glaring at the ruins. Hypo is on her lap.

RESPONDER

We're packed up. Are you sure you don't want to go to the hospital?

EDEN

I'm fine.

The Responder shrugs and the ambulance leaves.

Millie hands Eden a coffee. Mason is near, sipping a water bottle. Smoke stains his uniform.

MILLIE

What happened?

Eden still has the lab report envelope in her hand. She stares at it, wondering.

MASON

At least no one was hurt.

A gray-haired FIRE CHIEF approaches.

FIRE CHIEF

(to Eden)

Are you the owner?

EDEN

I'm the director.

FIRE CHIEF

Do you know anyone who'd want to burn down the clinic?

EDEN

I'm not sure. Why do you ask?

FIRE CHIEF

The investigators will make the final determination. But I've been fighting fires for 20 years. I know arson when I see it.

Firefighters start to string "Caution" tape across the blackened door and window of the clinic.

MILLIE

I can't imagine who'd want to destroy the clinic. It's been here forever.

EDEN

We're still here.

Eden hands Hypo to Millie. She hands the envelope to Mason. Ducking under the caution tape, she opens the fire-damaged door of the clinic.

MASON

Hey, you shouldn't-

He goes after her.

INT. WAITING ROOM AT THE CLINIC - DAY

The room is damaged and dirty, but the furniture is still intact.

Eden steps around burned debris.

MASON

This place is unsafe, Eden.

EDEN

Help me, Mason.

Eden goes into the business office behind the reception counter. She finds a table and brushes off debris. She moves the table, but it's heavy. Mason watches.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Are you going to help me or what?

Mason tucks the envelope under his arm and lifts the table.

EXT. WHITMAN COUNTY FREE CLINIC - DAY

Eden and Mason bring out the table. They set it down in front of the door on the sidewalk.

Eden goes back in.

MASON
(exasperated)
Jesus, Eden.

Eden comes back out with a chair. She sets it at the table. She moves the chair already outside to the table.

EDEN
Millie, let's open up.

MILLIE
What? We don't have anything. We don't even have a phone.

EDEN
Millie, I want you to sit down and welcome patients.

Millie sighs and sets Hypo on the table. The cat sits, as if this was a normal day. Millie takes a chair.

Eden goes to her car's trunk, rummages around, and removes a yellow pad and pens. She also removes her professional first aid kit.

She sets everything in front of Millie.

EDEN (CONT'D)
Make a little sign, Millie.

MILLIE
This is crazy.

EDEN
We're open for business.

By now, a small crowd has gathered, watching. George Johnson, the pharmacist at the monthly breakfast, pushes through the crowd, boxes in his arms.

EDEN (CONT'D)
George, it's good to see you.

GEORGE
I saw what you were doing. I had some extra supplies. I thought you might need them.

EDEN

You're so generous, George. Thank you.

PASCO

You're going to need more than handouts, Eden.

Pasco stands at the table, surprising Eden. Mason is watching the scene, still holding the envelope with the lab reports.

EDEN

The community's support is very humbling. We're going to rebuild, of course.

PASCO

The county may pay your salary, but it was donations and fees that kept the clinic open. You don't really think you can survive for long.

EDEN

We're going to do our best.

Pasco considers a moment. He meets Millie's eye. While the crowd watches, he turns and walks away.

EDEN (CONT'D)

The mine could help, Pasco.

Pasco stops, then climbs into his red truck and drives off.

The crowd moves a little closer to Eden. The Waitress from the diner brings donuts and coffee.

MASON

(to Eden)

I meant to tell you. I scraped some bits off the road surface and sent them to the state crime lab. It might be months...

EDEN

But you said-

MASON

I told them it was for an accident investigation. I can make it stick if I need to.

Eden takes Mason's hand.

EDEN

Thanks for coming to look for me.

MASON

Just doing my job.

DISSOLVE TO:

BEGIN MONTAGE

The reconstruction of the clinic begins.

Eden and townspeople clear out debris.

New framing goes up under dozens of hands.

Mason, in civilian clothes, and Eden work on an exam room.

Millie directs the placement of furniture in the waiting room and business office.

Pasco looks on, unsure what to think.

The upstairs apartment gets a new look with modern appliances and lighting.

Eden and Mason bring in fresh furniture. Hypo scampers around, enjoying the new space.

The clinic holds a grand opening party. Eden cuts the ribbon in front of the new façade.

END MONTAGE

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden sits in her still-cramped office.

She taps on her laptop, which is connected to a large monitor.

An email arrives. It's from Mason. The subject is "Lab Results".

Eden opens the email. It reads, "Hope this is what you're looking for. - Mason".

Eden opens an attachment. A logo with a microscope and lab beaker appears under the text "State Forensic Laboratory".

She pages through the report, growing more excited.

CLOSE-IN: Eden highlights a line in the report. The line reads, "High levels of oxides of terbium, gallium, and tantalum."

CLOSE-IN: Eden highlights another line. "Oxides and other chemicals seen as byproducts of rare earth ore processing."

CLOSE-IN: Another highlight: "Not naturally occurring."

Eden hits "Reply" on the email. She writes, "This is exactly what I'm looking for." She hits Send.

INT. APARTMENT ABOVE THE CLINIC - NIGHT

Eden sits on her bed, typing. The printer on her desk spits out a single page.

The page has graphics and text, but it's seen from behind.

Eden smiles.

INT. BUSINESS OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden stands at the big office printer, which churns out copies of her makeshift flier.

She gives a sheaf to Millie.

EDEN

I'd like you to hand out one of these to every patient.

Millie examines the flier. She's shocked.

The graphic is a combination of a skull-and-crossbones and the road sign for SR 235. The text reads, "Avoid the highway. SR 235 is poisoned. Questions? Ask Opportunity Resource Explorers."

MILLIE

What is this?

EDEN

It's time Progress started asking some questions.

MILLIE

About what? I don't understand.

The shopkeeper's bell RINGS. Myrtle Edwards comes in.

MYRTLE
Hello, Eden. Millie. Just thought
I'd say hi. What do you have there?

Eden hands a flier to Myrtle, who reads it.

MYRTLE (CONT'D)
Poisoned? How can a road be
poisoned?

The bell RINGS again. A young MOTHER and BABY enter.

EDEN
(to Millie)
Make sure everyone gets a flier,
Millie.

MILLIE
Even the babies?

The office phone RINGS.

MILLIE (CONT'D)
I don't know. How do I explain
this?

Eden lays a handful of fliers on the reception counter.

Millie answers the phone.

MILLIE (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Whitman County Free Clinic. How can
I help you?
(beat)
Hold, please.
(to Eden)
It's a TV station.

MYRTLE
A TV station? Eden, you need to
tell me what you're doing.

EDEN
I'll take it in my office, Millie.
Excuse me, Myrtle.

Eden exits. Myrtle and Millie meet each other's gaze. Myrtle,
upset, takes a couple of fliers and marches out the door.

The Mother with the Baby picks up a flier.

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden's at her desk.

EDEN
Eden Davidson here.

INT. CHANNEL 10 NEWSROOM - DAY

Reporters and producers work on the day's stories for a large, regional TV station. Heidi Hill, the TV reporter who did the stand-up at the freeway overpass, is at her desk.

HEIDI
Hello, is this Eden Davidson?
You're the medical director at the clinic?
(beat)
We received your email.
(beat)
Yeah, your timing is pretty interesting. We just got some papers from that mine, erm, Opportunity Resource Explorers. They look like lab reports.

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden listens closely.

EDEN
Who are they from?

INT. CHANNEL 10 NEWSROOM - DAY

Heidi scribbles a note.

HEIDI
That's not clear. They're postmarked Whitman City, but there's no return address. No cover letter or other note. They reference the same rare earths that you talked about in your email. Can you help us figure this out?

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden realizes her gambit is paying off.

EDEN

I may have seen those reports too.

INT. CHANNEL 10 NEWSROOM - DAY

Heidi waves over a producer.

HEIDI

Do you know the source? Uh, huh.

(beat)

You'd rather not say. Okay, I respect that. Do you trust the source as knowledgeable? Would he or she know what they're talking about?

(beat)

An insider. Okay.

Heidi nods to the producer. She gives a thumbs up.

HEIDI (CONT'D)

We might like to talk to you more, Ms Davidson. Can I give you a call back?

(beat)

Great. Goodbye for now.

Heidi hangs up and huddles with the producer.

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC

Eden hangs up the phone. She's started something.

Millie pops her head in the door.

MILLIE

You'd better come out front.

INT. WAITING ROOM AT THE CLINIC - DAY

More than dozen people are in the waiting room, talking and gesticulating. Among them are past patients, such as Heather Bronson and Alberto Garcia. Many are holding fliers.

Eden enters. The visitors converge on Eden.

HEATHER

What's this about, Eden? My husband works at the mine. Should he quit?

ALBERTO

I don't understand how a road could be poisoned. Is it on my truck?

The group surrounds Eden peppering her with questions.

EDEN

I'm going to tell everyone everything.

Mason, in uniform, pushes through the crowd.

MASON

Eden, can I speak with you?

Mason pulls her into the hallway.

EXT. HALLWAY AT THE CLINIC - DAY

A door closes behind Mason and Eden. A small window allows people in the waiting room to watch them.

MASON

Whatever it is you're doing, stop now.

EDEN

I going to tell people what's going on. That's all they want to know. What the hell's going on.

MASON

You're not making any sense.

EDEN

The road rage. The so-called accidents. The lab reports and the business plan. The state crime lab stuff you sent me. It's all coming together. O-R-E is running an experiment on this town, a test case. It's poisoning us. The tiniest things tick us off. People think road rage is just people losing control. Maybe that's true most of the time. This time, here in Progress, the road itself is making us crazy.

MASON

And you're going to fix it by starting a riot?

EDEN

I'm not going to give powerful people like Pasquale Carbone the chance to squelch the truth.

MASON

Eden, slow down. Let me take this to my bosses. They can bring in the state transportation people. Do an investigation.

EDEN

And how many people will be hurt or killed while we wait for the results? I'll tell you how long. Until O-R-E doesn't need a little town like Progress any more.

Eden's phone buzzes.

MASON

You're frightening people. How is that going to help?

EDEN

Shit. It's from Chris Jacobs.

CHRIS (TEXT)

I've been fired.

MASON

He works for the mine, right?

CHRIS (TEXT)

Pasco found out that I gave you the lab reports.

MASON

He took the documents?

EDEN (TEXT)

Where are you?

CHRIS (TEXT)

He threatened me.

EDEN (TEXT)

You need to get away.

(to Mason)

You need to find him.

MASON

How the hell am I supposed to find him?

EDEN
You need to protect him.

MASON
From what?

EDEN
And then you need to close the road.

MASON
Are you completely crazy? Even if I had the authority, which I don't, it would kill this town.

EDEN
Do it before someone actually dies.

Eden's phone buzzes again.

CHRIS (TEXT)
I think Pasco's coming after you.

CHRIS (TEXT) (CONT'D)
I'm scared, Eden. I'm really scared.

EXT. ABANDONED TRUCK STOP ON LANGLEY ROAD - DAY

Chris is outside the old building at the truck stop. Off camera, a loud DIESEL ENGINE signals the arrival of a large vehicle.

Chris finishes his text to Eden. He looks up and screams.

INT. HALLWAY AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Rhonda opens the door.

RHONDA
You really should come out here, Eden. They keep asking for you.

EDEN
What about Millie? Can't she help?

RHONDA
She's disappeared. I've been looking for her, but she's nowhere.

EDEN
I'm coming.
(to Mason)
Close the road. Keep people off it.
It's poisoned.

Eden goes back into the crowd.

MASON
Who do you think I am? The
goddamned governor?

INT. WAITING ROOM AT THE CLINIC - DAY

The waiting room is overflowing with people, some in angry arguments. More elbow their way through the door.

Through the front window, Eden sees more people coming.

EXT. WHITMAN COUNTY FREE CLINIC - DAY

Pushing her way outside, people stream toward the clinic. Are things getting out of control?

Eden notices a pair of small traffic barricades left behind from the reconstruction of the clinic, as well as a half-used roll of caution tape.

As people mill about, she opens the trunk of her car and gets the barricades and tape inside.

The remote truck emblazoned with "Action News at 10" pulls up. Heidi Hill and Storey Jackson exit. Jackson grabs a camera from the truck and starts shooting.

HEIDI
Ms Davidson? Are you Eden Davidson?

EDEN
Yes, I am. And if you want your
story, you'd better follow me.

Eden gets into her car. She's mobbed by the crowd. Mason pushes them back.

Eden drives off. Heidi and Storey scramble back into the remote truck and follow her.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY OVERPASS - DAY

Eden stops at the intersection where SR 235 branches off toward Progress.

The TV truck pulls up behind her.

Eden places the barricades across the road. She runs the caution tape between them.

Storey gets pictures. Heidi watches.

Cars come off the freeway. The drivers expect the road to be open. They honk their horns in frustration when they see Eden blocking the way.

The remote truck's microwave mast rises over the scene.

Storey rushes to set up a live shot.

INT. CHANNEL 10 STUDIO - DAY

A MALE ANCHOR and a FEMALE ANCHOR sit at a typical local television news set. They face the studio camera.

A chyron saying "Breaking News" rolls across the screen.

MALE ANCHOR

We're tracking unusual activity just off the Progress exit of the interstate.

FEMALE ANCHOR

Action News reporter Heidi Hill is at the scene. We heard someone is blocking a highway. Is that right, Heidi?

CUT TO:

The studio director goes to Heidi.

HEIDI

We've been following the story of a local nurse, Eden Davidson, who claims the highway is poisoned.

Storey pans over to Eden, who's handing out fliers to angry drivers.

HEIDI (CONT'D)

Ms Davidson, can you join us?

Eden comes over.

HEIDI (CONT'D)

You work for the Whitman County
Free Clinic, right?

EDEN

I'm the executive director and
medical director.

HEIDI

Why are you setting up these
barriers?

EDEN

I have proof that the company
mining rare earths a few miles from
here put dangerous materials into
the road surface. It's making
people sick.

HEIDI

How is that possible?

EDEN

The company's own testing showed
that it can literally make people
angry. I noticed an upsurge in road
rage incidents over the past three
years. Some people nearly died.
That's about the time the company
had the road repaved. I found the
toxic materials in the road. I
asked the sheriff's department to
close the road, but they said no.
So I'm closing it myself as a
public health hazard.

(to camera)

Opportunity Resource Explorers
needs to admit what it did and
clean up the road.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY OVERPASS - DAY

Heidi and Storey, with Eden, finish the live shot.

HEIDI

(to camera)

We'll be on-scene throughout the
day bringing live updates.

(beat)

STOREY

Clear.

Eden starts toward her car.

HEIDI

Wait, Eden. What are you doing now?

EDEN

Going back for more fliers.

LATER - CONTINUOUS

Eden hands out the last of her fliers. The light is fading. The TV remote truck is gone.

Cars maneuver around the barriers onto SR 235. The drivers ignore Eden's warnings.

Tired, Eden gets ready to leave. The alternative route into town, Furious Way, is still blocked with orange cones and detour signs.

Her phone buzzes. The number is labeled "Mason".

EDEN (CONT'D)

I'm heading home in a minute.

MASON (O.S.)

Bad news.

EDEN

What?

EXT. ABANDONED TRUCK STOP ON LANGLEY ROAD - DAY

Mason is on the phone with Eden.

MASON

Got a call of a body at the old truck stop.

A man's body, torn and bloody, lays at Mason's feet.

MASON (CONT'D)

I found Chris. He's dead.

EDEN (O.S.)

God.

MASON

I think someone ran him over.
There's tire marks on his back and
legs.

EDEN (O.S.)

Can you tell anything?

MASON

Probably a large pickup or SUV.
These kind of tires are bigger than
some people. We won't know for sure
until the forensics team analyzes
them.

EDEN (O.S.)

I should come.

MASON

There's nothing for you to do here.
Go home and rest.

She heads down SR 235.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - NIGHT

Eden's car runs alone on the highway. The final orange band
of daylight sits on the horizon.

INT. EDEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Eden zips over the road, her headlights on.

CHRIS'S VOICE plays in her head.

CHRIS (O.S.)

They're coming for you, Eden.
They're coming for you.

To distract herself, she turns on the radio, which plays
western swing. She wipes sweat from her forehead.

An ongoing car zooms past.

The road curves through a low range of hills.

Eden hears the gradual rise of a rumbling sound. She fears it
may be coming from her car.

EDEN

Shit.

Her dashboard looks normal. She looks around her car, trying to pinpoint the rumble. Is a tire going flat? Did something come loose?

The rumble is steady.

She looks in her rear-view mirror.

Headlights switch on, momentarily blinding Eden.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Good God.

It's the monstrous black pickup, right on her bumper.

Eden panics. Speeding up, she tries to outpace the truck. She succeeds for a moment. She sees a faint glow in the cab, but can't make out the driver.

CHRIS (O.S.)

I think Pasco's coming after you.

The truck catches up.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - NIGHT

The monster truck is within inches of Eden's tailgate.

INT. MONSTER TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

POV: The DRIVER looks down on Eden's puny sedan. Nothing in this perspective gives away the Driver's age, gender, or any other characteristic.

The road ahead is clear of other cars. The Driver punches the accelerator.

The engine roars.

The Driver swerves into the oncoming lane and moves ahead, as if they want to pass.

INT. EDEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Eden sees the monster truck, its tires almost as tall as her roof, edge up beside her. It's trying to push her over.

She's getting angry. The world around her shimmers, as if she's driving into an oven of hate.

Eden glances ahead. There's a set of oncoming headlights.

The truck drops back, swerves into the lane behind Eden, and edges forward.

Eden's eyes blaze with fury. Her purse is on the passenger seat.

Her speedometer climbs from 75 miles per hour to 80 miles per hour.

Eden dumps out her purse onto the seat. There's the gun.

A curve comes up.

The monster truck sees the curve as well and backs off to take the curve.

Eden brakes. Everything on the seat slides forward, falling onto the floorboard.

Eden snags the gun just as it tips over the seat.

Her car swerves into the oncoming lane, but she gets it back in place.

The monster truck is back on her tail.

EDEN
(screaming)
Get away! Get away!

The vehicles head up a mild incline. The monster truck drops back, but it roars as it tries to keep up with Eden's car.

As the top the rise, both vehicles lift off the ground.

Eden barely keeps control. Same with the truck.

On the back side of the rise, the truck catches up. It touches Eden's bumper.

EDEN (CONT'D)
I told you to get away!

Eden points the gun at the truck. Her hand and arm sway in the awkward position. Her other hand and arm struggle to keep control.

She fires. The back window explodes in fragments.

The truck backs away. It roars back, the noise louder now.

Eden fires again. The bullet strikes the truck's hood.

Nothing can slow the truck.

A highway sign: "Manson Road: 1 mile".

Eden has an idea. She grins. She speeds up. Her speedometer touches 85. Her engine whines.

The truck falls back a little.

Another highway sign: "Manson Road: 1/2 mile."

Her headlights reflect off the Manson Road overpass.

Another highway sign: "Exit," and a rightward arrow.

The truck is still on her tail.

EDEN (CONT'D)
Got you, you bastard.

At the last possible second, Eden swerves onto the exit ramp.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - NIGHT

Eden goes up the ramp embankment toward the pavement.

The heavier, less nimble monster truck can't take the sudden change of direction. Although the Driver tries to take the exit, they fail. The momentum carries the vehicle into the abutment. It explodes.

Eden flies through the intersection at the top of the ramp, nearly striking a car crossing her path.

INT. EDEN'S CAR - NIGHT

She flies down the opposite on-ramp. She brakes hard to a stop.

In her rear-view mirror, she sees the burning truck. Her anger dissipates. The Driver needs help.

She turns around and speeds toward the carnage.

Her lights illuminate a figure on the road's verge, below the wreckage.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - NIGHT

Eden runs toward the figure. Its face is turned away.

Coming around, Eden sees the face illuminated by the burning truck.

It's Millie. She's dead.

Cars on their way in and out of Progress stop. People step out, headlights causing their shadows to fall across the road.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STATE ROUTE 235 - NIGHT

Sheriff's cruisers, fire trucks, and an ambulance work the scene.

Attendants load a body shrouded in a bag into the ambulance.

The door to the rear seat of Mason's cruiser is open. Eden sits on the seat, water bottle in hand.

MASON

That's quite a story, chasing you on the highway like that.

EDEN

It's not a story. Millie tried to kill me.

MASON

Why? She had a job. Ties to the area. By all accounts an ordinary person.

EDEN

I don't know.

MASON

There's a connection to Pasco, though.

EDEN

What?

MASON

Seems she used to work for him, a long time ago, when the mine first opened. That's what the girls in the clinic back office told me. They were an item in high school too.

EDEN

Carrying a torch? Fighting for her man?

MASON

I'm sure there will be a lot of questions. In the meantime, I have some more news. You'll like it.

EDEN

Yeah?

MASON

I talked the sheriff into temporarily blocking SR 235 from the interstate to the Progress city limits. There's a detour available using Furious Way. They're finishing up the work next week.

EDEN

Not paid for by O-R-E, I hope.

MASON

I have a feeling they're done with road work.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. WAITING ROOM AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Patients wait for service. In a corner, bolted to the wall, a television shows the opening for Action News on Channel 10.

Rhonda sits at the reception desk.

RHONDA

Hey, where the remote? The news is starting.

Jane hands her colleague the remote. Rhonda turns up the volume.

MALE ANCHOR

...the trial began today in a \$100 million civil suit against Opportunity Resource Explorers...

CUT TO:

INT. CHANNEL 10 STUDIO - DAY

Pasco and a passel of lawyers walk into a courthouse. Viewers see them as video images on screens behind the anchors.

FEMALE ANCHOR (O.C.)
 ...Investigators charge the company
 held back information about the
 health effects of their road
 products.

The director cuts to a live shot of Heidi Hill at the SR 235
 exit. The road behind her is blocked off.

FEMALE ANCHOR (CONT'D)
 Action News's Heidi Hill is at the
 Progress exit off the interstate.
 Heidi, when's the road going to
 reopen?

HEIDI
 It could be months, Audrey. State
 transportation officials say they
 might have to tear out all the
 pavement from here to Progress.

INT. WAITING ROOM AT THE CLINIC - DAY

The TV turns off. Rhonda is surprised.

RHONDA
 Hey, I was watching that.

Eden sets the remote on the counter.

EDEN
 You can watch it on your phone
 later. Right now, I need you to
 check in patients.

Alberto waits patiently at the counter.

RHONDA
 Yes, Eden.

The shopkeeper's bell RINGS. Mason comes in and greets Eden.

MASON
 Are you up for lunch?

EDEN
 Yeah, your timing is good.

Mason follows Eden to her office.

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - DAY

Eden takes off her white coat and hangs it on a peg. Hypo watches from her office chair. Mason scratches the cat.

MASON

I wanted to let you know that the fire investigation is done.

EDEN

And?

MASON

They found traces of ethanol on a remnant of second floor carpet. Someone poured medical alcohol on the floor and lit it.

EDEN

Millie? Did Pasco put her up to it?

MASON

We'll never know for sure. Maybe he took advantage of her feelings for him. Manipulated her. Hard to prove he's ultimately responsible.

EDEN

Clever. I'm sorry for what happened. Millie was a nice person.

MASON

And probably an arsonist and she nearly murdered you.

EDEN

Pasco and the mine are the real culprits. But will they be held accountable for endangering thousands of people?

MASON

Maybe this time, the powerful will pay a price for treating people like mice in a cage.

EXT. WHITMAN COUNTY FREE CLINIC - DAY

Eden and Mason exit the clinic.

MASON

What's for lunch?

EDEN
Soup and salad, I think.

They go into The Squeeze Inn.

FADE TO BLACK.