

IN THE SHADOWS OF NOVEMBER

EPISODE ONE
FROM OUT OF THE CLOUDS

Written by Bill Albert

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INT. RADIO ROOM - NIGHT

The display panel of a ham radio during a conversation. CQ is in the room with us and 2X2L is on the radio. When 2X2L speaks there is some STATIC and levels on the radio monitor react.

CQ (V.O.)

2X2L this is CQ, do you copy?

(pause)

2X2L this is CQ, do you copy?

2X2L (V.O.)

I copy, CQ, reception is good, over.

CQ (V.O.)

How is the sky in Texas tonight?

2X2L (V.O.)

Pitch black. Low clouds and can't even see the lights of Dallas from here. Thunder in the sky but no lightening. How about you? Over.

CQ (V.O.)

Nice and warm for November and you are coming in loud and clear.

2X2L (V.O.)

Thank you, CQ, over.

CQ (V.O.)

Thought you'd be watching the president.

2X2L (V.O.)

Negative, just more smoke about the Middle East.

CQ (V.O.)

I voted for him.

2X2L (V.O.)

I didn't.

EXT. SPACE ABOVE THE PLANET EARTH - NIGHT

Beneath is the North American continent. The sun is just going down over the western horizon. Everything is silent and peaceful for a while. The ham radio conversation continues.

CQ (V.O.)

Thought you southerners stuck together.

2X2L (V.O.)

We do. That doesn't mean I don't think they blow smoke once in a while.

CQ (V.O.)

Don't they all.

There are 25 bright flashes across the face of the continent. They are burning nuclear explosions lighting up the night at strategic points across the United States. STATIC on the radio.

2X2L (V.O.)

(child, enters room)

Daddy, daddy, what is that big bright light in the sky?

There is a shriek, a howl, and an overload, then everything goes silent.

CQ (V.O.)

2X2L this is CQ. What was that?

(silence)

2X2L this is CQ. Is there anybody there?

(silence)

Is there anybody?

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

This hospital has been abandoned for some time and has been looted. Parts of the walls cut up, ceiling tiles on the floor, dark and dirty.

TITLE OVER: January 30
 Albany, Georgia
 82 days since the bombs

Lights approaching from adjoining hallway and two men, TALL MAN and BLONDE MAN, using flashlights come around a corner and take a few steps forward before two more, ANGRY MAN and SIMPLE MAN, join them. They all wear Torchlight uniforms.

TALL MAN

You get her?

ANGRY MAN

She didn't come this way.

TALL MAN

She had to!

SIMPLE MAN

She didn't!

The flashlights scan the hallway and a nearby door for a few seconds.

BLONDE MAN

She must have circled back.

TALL MAN

You two stay here in case she swings back.

TALL MAN and BLONDE MAN rush off. ANGRY MAN and SIMPLE MAN take up positions scanning the hallway and nearby rooms with their flashlights.

They do not see that hidden above them, nestled against the wall brace above the ceiling tiles, is NOVEMBER, female, in her 20's with blood on her face. She is not moving, almost as if she were dead.

ANGRY MAN

Where the hell did she go?

SIMPLE MAN

Well, she's not near us, anyway.

ANGRY MAN

Damn, I wish she were.

SIMPLE MAN

I don't.

ANGRY MAN

Why not? There's a reward for her. You know?

SIMPLE MAN

But if she's here, then, you know, it could be here.

ANGRY MAN

It?

SIMPLE MAN

It. You know. Boom. It!

Angry Man looks around uncomfortably. He hadn't thought about that.

Unseen and unheard by the men November breaths slowly and her hand tightens her grip on the brace for protection.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

It's almost completely deserted except for a lone figure walking down the corridor in absolute silence. It's November, dried blood on her face, and there is a blank look in her eyes.

She stops at an intersection, there is a FLAPPING sound off that gets her attention. Not really thinking she turns and walks slowly off.

She sees something on the wall and moves closer. It's a calendar.

INT. ABANDONED OFFICE - NIGHT

This office has been abandoned for some time. Drawers open, an empty closet, a desk, chairs, and a broken open window. There is a slight breeze and a FLAPPING sound.

November enters and pauses, listens, then heads towards the sound. There is a calendar left on the wall that is flapping in the breeze. She stops and stares at it. For the first time she is aware of her surroundings. She reaches up and puts a hand on the calendar.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

TITLE OVER: March 4th
 Shreveport, Louisiana
 115 days since the bombs

This is a very dark and crowded warehouse. Flashlights moving around and sounds of crashing. There is a FIGHT going on by the SOUNDS. It is finally silent. JERRY, male, 19, a punk with less brains than muscles, looks up as he hears boots walking towards him. The boots stop, turn and one is pressed against his chest. November, glares down.

 NOVEMBER (O.C.)
 (tough, threatening)
 I warned you. I wouldn't give away
 anything I didn't want to. Got it?
 (MORE)

Jerry looks up and tries to resist. The boot presses harder onto his chest and he finally nods.

 NOVEMBER (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 I'll take what I bargained for.
 The rest you can keep. But I'll
 stay in town for a few days and
 you better hope I don't hear
 anything about you!

The boots hold for a moment and then walk away. Jerry holds steady for a few moments, in great pain, and then slowly rolls onto his side.

Something catches his eye, and he looks directly at it, then at the direction the boots left, then back at the butt of a handgun in the shadows.

EXT. SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA - DAY

A deserted city with a blanket of snow covering homes and businesses. The sky and snow are gray. We see a few other parts of the snow-covered city. There is a small building with an empty parking lot, and an empty dish of cat food for strays. A bike with a warped wheel outside but no major damage or destruction. It's like everyone just left.

There is no movement or signs of activity anywhere.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Three people staring down with sad and serious faces. A man, ROSS, 30, a former teacher, is shaking his head.

The woman, LISA, 30, former accountant, sighs as her shoulders drop.

The younger man, SEAN, 18, a local boy, is sadly licking his lips.

ROSS

There's nothing else we
can do?

SEAN

Everything we can spare with
the supplies we have since the
bombs. No way to keep Ron alive.

LISA

Pull it. Finish it.

This is a solemn moment for them. Lisa looks away in sadness, Ross closes his eyes and prays while Sean shrugs and reaches off camera and pulls back a very sharp and rusty knife. He pauses, sadly, then leans forward.

LISA

I'm really sorry.

SEAN

You would have been tasty.

Sean's hands move off as he does something. He pulls away and we see a small dead plant in his hands. This is a storage room with standard items, paper, mops, brooms, etc. This room, however, has several plastic boxes set in rows under bright studio lights. The boxes are marked for vegetable growth.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Ron the radish. Rest in peace.

LISA

Ron the radish? Carl the carrot
over there? Pete the potato in
that one?

SEAN

Don't be silly. It's Paula.
All the potatoes are girls.

LISA

This isn't a game, you know.
It's survival.

ROSS

This is a very serious situation,
yes, but we will survive together.
We have been lucky.

SEAN

Things will be back to normal
soon.

Ross and Lisa glance at each other. Ross nods but Lisa shakes her head.

LISA

I suppose we can throw out the way
we used to do things here. Who
knows how many bombs dropped in
November? All the rock and ash
in the air, the weather patterns
have changed. Maybe we won't
get a spring this year.

ROSS

Word has it Mayor Carter is
looking at turning Independence
Stadium into a green house.

LISA

Heard that, too. There was talk
of that when they sealed off the
gardens of the American Rose
Center. I was there the day they
did that. The city's SWAT team
cleared us out. No resistance,
we never fought back, but they
still expected trouble.

ROSS

That was right after news came in of the riots in Stonewall. 37 people were killed, and the city hall was burnt down. I think Mayor Carter was a little worried.

SEAN

Devin always was a bit of a showoff. So was Mrs. Devin. My home is next door to his. I mowed their lawn last summer. I always had to mow the lawn nearest the road early in the morning so the neighbors would see it clean on their way to work.

ROSS

We reminded him just how good of a town we are.

LISA

Yeah, but they still had no reason to take out the flowers.

ROSS

Of course, there is.

LISA

Give me one.

ROSS

Controlled environment, perfect growing conditions, stockpiles of supplies and you won't get a full belly eating roses. You should have faith. People will always do the right thing.

Lisa's shoulders drop. Suddenly a girl, AUSTIN, 19, a student from Texas, rushes into the room.

AUSTIN

I saw something!

SEAN

What?

AUSTIN

On the screen! Someone
is broadcasting!

Austin rushes off. They look at each other for a second then jump up and follow her at a run.

INT. TECH ROOM - DAY

This room is filled with computers that are all blank. There is a small TV with rabbit ears sitting on a table with a steady stream of static.

Austin enters at a run and skids to a stop when she gets to the TV. She curses and tries to adjust the set when the rest join her.

LISA

What was it?

SEAN

Was it the president? Well,
was it anyone familiar or official?

AUSTIN

It was just a few words on screen.

They watch Austin as she works on the set trying to regain a signal.

ROSS

Are you sure you saw something?

AUSTIN

Damn it, yes, I swear.

LISA

Well, there's nothing there now.

SEAN

Could it have been just an echo?
Something from the military?

AUSTIN

No!

ROSS

There's nothing there now.

SEAN

It's okay. You've spent so many hours looking for something. We all have, and we've all thought we saw something at some time.

AUSTIN

I don't know what happened to it. There was something there.

SEAN

Get your coat. We'll go walk around outside for a few.

Reluctantly Austin turns away from the TV and walks out with Sean.

ROSS

Do you think she saw something?

LISA

I don't know. I suppose so. It's just, after these months, I really thought things would be working again.

ROSS

I did too for a while. I just wonder if there is anyone left to put this country back together again. We know that D.C., the president, and most of congress is gone. Who's left?

LISA

And whose side are they on? I think, more than anything, I'd like to know who was responsible. Who hated us that much to set off 25 bombs?

ROSS

Ever wonder why 25? What was it
about that number? Why not 26?

Ross thinks about it for a moment, he doesn't know. He looks
out of the room and smiles.

ROSS

How lucky they are.

LISA

I worry about her. She's been
so lonely since November. We
lost a lot. She lost everything.

Ross and Lisa walk off and we remain in the studio looking at
the TV and hearing static. Then there is something, very
brief, that flashes across the screen. A few words on a
banner. The clearest word we can see is "RESTRICTED".

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Austin and Sean are seated on a bench outside.

AUSTIN

I swear, Sean, I saw something there.
Only a few words but, I tell you,
someone is broadcasting.

SEAN

I believe you. I just wonder who.

AUSTIN

It was pretty weak. If it were any of
us here in Shreveport we'd have heard
about it. Maybe one of the bigger ones
in Baton Rouge.

SEAN

What about out of state? Can't be
Little Rock or Dallas. Back in the
day, if the weather was good, we
could get Austin.

(sees her shrink back)

Oh, I am so sorry.

AUSTIN

I know, it's okay.

SEAN

Sometimes I forget.

AUSTIN

I was born there, I got my name there, and now it's all gone. Sometimes I try to forget. I was just going to be here for a few years of college. I have to remind myself that this is my new home.

Sean looks at her softly and tries to comfort her. Reaches out to take her hand but pulls back.

EXT. ARMY POST - ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI - DAY

There are plenty of "RESTRICTED" and other warning signs across the entrance to the base. There are US ARMY SOLDIERS, males, 20's, armed, patrolling the area. A military transport pulls up to the gate, the guards check the driver, nod, then lift up the barricades and allow the vehicle inside.

INT. ARMY WAREHOUSE - DAY

The transport enters a warehouse. Several guards exit the back of the transport along with Captain KINSELL, male, 30, regular army. He quickly heads towards office doors just as Colonel BARTO, male, 50's exits and meets him. They salute and there are several other vehicles and troops moving around the warehouse as they speak.

TITLE OVER: St Louis, Missouri

Colonel Barto is the top of the military chain of command in St. Louis. His reputation as a commander is two decades long and is well respected.

BARTO

Welcome back Captain Kinsell.

KINSELL

Thank you, sir.

BARTO

Any good news to report?

KINSELL

Some, Colonel Barto. The farmers agreed to "donate" a pretty good sized amount of food including two sides of beef.

BARTO

And the "donation" from us?

KINSELL

450 rounds, signal flares, the usual.

BARTO

Alright, I'm surprised they didn't try and raise their rate.

KINSELL

They did.

BARTO

Good work.

KINSELL

We'll need to send a convoy out there on Thursday.

Barto looks off at soldiers in the area. He sees Corporal DORVA, female, 20's, talking to another soldier near a jeep.

BARTO

Dorva!

She hears him and hurries over.

DORVA

Yes, Colonel.

BARTO

Have the Piggly Wiggly trucks been serviced?

DORVA

Yes, sir, as ordered and scheduled.

BARTO

Make sure they are cleaned and ready to go on a convoy Thursday at 0700. They'll be picking up up produce from the farmland.

DORVA

Other than me how many volunteers would you like as escorts?

BARTO

Well, if you're going I don't think we need anyone else. Get five for each truck, plus drivers.

DORVA

Yes, sir. Will that be all?

BARTO

For now. Get to it.

She runs off and Kinsell winks at Barto.

KINSELL

Think she'll have any trouble getting volunteers?

There is a round of CHEERS from soldiers off.

BARTO

Close. Were there any recruits?

KINSELL

4 of them. If you don't mind, I'd like to go through induction and training with them. I've been out there enough I think they trust me.

BARTO

Of course, you got it. We haven't gotten anywhere with recruiting on East Side.

KINSELL

I thought Denig had a dozen ready to start?

BARTO

So did he. So did I. When he went over to make it official only 5 of them showed up. Whatever happened to the other 7? Nobody knows. Or, at least, they won't talk about it.

KINSELL

Helping search for terrorists doesn't sound exciting anymore?

BARTO

I'm not sure it's so clear who the bad people are anymore.

INT. BACK OF TRANSPORT TRUCK - DAY

This truck is in motion so there are various bumps, a MOTOR hum, and occasional sounds from OUTSIDE. There are nine people in the back for the ride.

KLEPPER and LIVICK are both males, 25, and are heavily armed and uniformed mercenaries. The other seven are all males, 18ish, rough and tough street kids. Their clothes are ratty and torn, some scars, most with knives.

KLEPPER

All right, you made a good choice by taking a job with us. You're going to work hard and you're going to work fast. You're going to be tough and you're going to be strong. If someone is stupid enough to get in your way you teach them a lesson.

(he brandishes his automatic assault rifle)

They will show you the respect you deserve.

(glares at them)

Whether they like it or not.

The recruits cheer.

INT. TRADING POST - DAY

The Trading Post is several tents put together between buildings. It's like a garage sale but we see unusual signs on the tables. iPod and cell phones in trade for food and clothes. Five phones for a pair of jeans, laptop computer for 20 gallons of gas. There are also weapons.

EXT. CLOTHING TENT - DAY

A clothing tent with many styles of clothes stacked on shelves together. It's done in a hurry and not well organized.

There is a CLOTHES DEALER, female, 40's, with several tables of shirts, socks, etc. A HOMELESS MALE, 60's, in tattered and worn clothes, approaches her and looks at the table.

CLOTHES DEALER

What are you looking for?

HOMELESS MALE

(shrinks back, ashamed)

Clothes.

CLOTHES DEALER

Yeah, well, that's kinda what I do.
Anything in particular?

HOMELESS MALE

A shirt would be nice. And I haven't
Had socks since 11/9.

CLOTHES DEALER

Ok, I'm sure we got the right size.
What do you have in cash?

HOMELESS MALE

Well, no, but a trade.

CLOTHES DEALER

Ok, let me see it.

The Homeless Male sadly pulls out a ring from a small box and sadly hands it over to her. She watches his grief, then examines the watch closely.

HOMELESS MALE

Is it worth it?

CLOTHES DEALER

It's worth a fortune.

(MORE)

The Homeless Male looks at her hoping for new clothes.

CLOTHES DEALER (CONT'D)

I think it's worth more than that
to you. Anything else?

The Homeless Man pulls a brown paper sack from his coat and offers it to her. She looks inside, sighs, then hands him a shirt.

HOMELESS MALE

Bless you.

She nods and he turns to walk away. She calls him to stop, he turns back, and she tosses him a pair of socks, too.

People walking through the trading post and Lisa enters carrying a cloth bag. She is looking around and ends near the weapons table where a dealer, RICK, 30, is standing with his wife, CONNIE, 25.

CONNIE

Anything we can help you
with, miss?

LISA

Was hoping there might be a
seed dealer today.

RICK

Well, he was but he got cleared
out pretty fast. Everybody wants
seeds these days.

CONNIE

I think more people will try
green houses. Our son is growing
onions in his bedroom. Emptied
out the fish tank for it.

LISA

Does it work?

CONNIE

So far so good. The trick is to keep a regular cycle with lights.

LISA

I'll keep that in mind. Thanks.

RICK

Well, can we interest you in anything?

LISA

What have you got?

RICK

Well, weapons. Handguns, easy to carry, automatics.

LISA

Just what do these go for?

RICK

Well, depends on what you've got. Traded a Jericho 9mm for a motorcycle last week. It was full of gas so I threw in a full clip. High power weapons, Bushweapons, AKs, now those are in high demand.

She looks at the weapons. All the handguns on the table are black except for one silver colored gun.

LISA

How much for one of those?

Connie and Rick look her up and down.

RICK

Well, I could make a special deal just for you.

LISA

How so?

RICK

Two hours, twice that will get you
two dozen armor piercing bullets.

LISA

Two hours of what?
(Rick whispers in her ear)
I'm not interested.

RICK

That's okay.

CONNIE

If he's not your style, maybe I can
help you out.

LISA

Neither of you could handle me for
two hours.

Rick and Connie watch her leave with a pleasant smile. Then they get serious as they watch someone else. November, boots and jacket from the warehouse, approaches and look down at the weapons. Her hand falls on the silver gun.

INT. CAR GARAGE - DAY

Sean is working on a car in a garage. There is a woman, MAGGIE, 35, at a work bench behind him.

SEAN

(closing car hood)
It looks like everything is
in good shape. The spark plugs
are clean and the injectors
are good. Just wish we had some
place to go.

MAGGIE

I know it seems like a waste
of time to work on the car. I
think part of it is a denial.

SEAN

I can't really blame you.

MAGGIE

I suppose we all have ways to cope. I've woven a few blankets you can have in exchange for this week's work. Fair trade?

SEAN

Fair trade. Thank you.

MAGGIE

They'll keep you nice and warm on this cold spring. You and your sweetie, Austin.

SEAN

She's not my girlfriend. I just wish.

MAGGIE

You ask her yet?

SEAN

Anything new on the weather?

MAGGIE

The barometer is still high, so we'll be getting the same weather. The temperature has been rising a degree or two. We may get a spring yet.

SEAN

Some rain would help getting the crops growing.

MAGGIE

Yes. I used to love the rain.

SEAN

Me, too. Now days when you mention rain, you can see the shiver in people. Is your Geiger Counter still working?

MAGGIE

No, the batteries are dead. I've been trying to trade for more but the costs are so high. Maybe I'll trade off the car. It's not like there's any place to go.

SEAN

I don't think we have any left that will fit what you need. Most of them Lisa has used at the trading posts. On the other hand, some of the smaller bats don't get much use.

MAGGIE

So, if we could rig them up together.

SEAN

It might work. What do we need first?

MAGGIE

The most useful thing in the world. Strong enough and abundant enough even the bombs couldn't get rid of it.

They look at each other and smile.

SEAN/MAGGIE

DUCT TAPE!

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Austin is seated at a table surrounded by several books. She is looking at a book on gardening. She pauses and gently rubs a hand across the book cover. A librarian, BRENDA, 25, slowly walks over.

BRENDA

Hi Austin.

AUSTIN

Brenda? Didn't know you were here now. I suppose I should have figured you'd here.

BRENDA

Yes. Books, real books, with paper and hardbacks and dust covers. Not just pixels.

AUSTIN

Yeah, I remember when we were interns at the Banner. Sometimes I miss the smell of the ink when the papers were printed.

BRENDA

And that sound of 10,000 copies an hour coming out of the press.

AUSTIN

Back when we thought paper was plentiful.

BRENDA

Hope you enjoyed them. Gardening books are in demand these days. We've been keeping pretty close eyes on them.

AUSTIN

I can believe that. I have to admit I never thought much about gardening before.

BRENDA

Not many people have. Sometimes, since 11/9, I wish I could just call the airport and get a ticket for Columbus and be home in a few hours. I used to love flying. Another thing the bombs brought an end to except for Texas A.N.G.

AUSTIN

I see them patrolling once a week.

BRENDA

That's just the sky. Have you been to the border? Have you tried to get into Texas?

AUSTIN

What is the latest?

BRENDA

We had some people in here yesterday who were turned back at the border. Air National Guard hitting the skies regularly. Tanks and checkpoints on the highways. If your ID doesn't have Texas as your home the borders are closed.

AUSTIN

Turning people away like they are a terrorist is wrong. Can't they tell the difference?

BRENDA

Like it's not obvious?

AUSTIN

I never thought that would happen.

BRENDA

I hear there are some alliances between states forming. Supposedly there is a North-Eastern Alliance that's holding together, California has sealed its borders.

AUSTIN

How are you getting any info? No stations are broadcasting anymore.

They don't see her, but November is on the far side of the library. Between the books there is the jacket from the warehouse and the gun show. She moves off.

BRENDA

Hamm radios. With the internet and instant messaging nobody thinks about them anymore.

AUSTIN

Why so hush, hush? There's nothing wrong with them.

BRENDA

I really shouldn't have told you this.

AUSTIN

(puts her hand in Brenda's)
I understand.

BRENDA

Though they are around there's only a few dozen. How many people would want to use them to get info on their home states? How many refugees would bombard them with questions?

AUSTIN

I understand.

BRENDA

Thank you. There was a woman in here last week talking about her home in Hawaii. I could see in her eyes how getting home was keeping her going. I was afraid the truth would be too much for her.

AUSTIN

What truth?

BRENDA

Hawaii's gone. Destroyed by the bombs.

AUSTIN

Another lost girl like us.

EXT. STORAGE BUILDINGS - DAY

Lisa is walking away from the Trading Post carrying a box. The figure wearing the jacket is off in the distance. As Lisa enters an alley she passes by Jerry. He spots her and starts following her.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

We are in a studio filled with all sorts of people. In the back we see Austin, Sean, Lisa, and Ross watching the PERFORMER, the GUESTS, and Sean keeps glancing at Austin.

PERFORMER

Two households, both alike in
dignity, in fair Verona, where
we lay our stage, where ancient
grudge, breaks to new mutiny,
where civil blood makes civil
hands unclean. From forth the
loins of these two foes a pair
of star-crossed lovers take their
life, Whose miss-adventured
piteous overthrow doth, with
their deaths, bury their parent's
strife. The passage of their
death marked love, and the
continuance of their parent's
rage, is now the action of our stage.

INT. LOBBY AND HALLWAY - NIGHT

Some people drop cans of soup or other food in a basket by the door as they exit. Finally, the last leaves and she, Ross, Sean, and Austin are left alone.

Ross locks the door, and they look at some of the donations. The lobby is filled, not cluttered, with items and there is a bulletin board with several hand - written postings on it.

ROSS

I thought that went well.

AUSTIN

Yes, a good crowd. I'm glad Maria came back. I could listen to her sing all day.

LISA

Me, too. I don't mind Bernard either. His observations are weird, they make me think but give me a good laugh.

SEAN

No reason an apocalypse can't
be funny.

There is a pause, and they all laugh. There is a KNOCK from
outside and they all approach the door to the lobby.

LISA

I'm sorry, we've finished for
tonight.

We hear MUMBLING from outside and the others come to join her.

AUSTIN

What did he say?

ROSS

It sounded like he said rain.
Good lord, let him in.

They look at each other fearfully and open the door. Jerry
enters, menacing with a weapon in hand.

JERRY

Back, back in the corner, out
of the way.

They move back but ROSS holds his ground in front of them.

ROSS

Ok, ok, we know times are
tough. There's a basket there
by the door. Just take it.

JERRY

I don't need this crap. I can
get this from anybody I want.

ROSS

There are some laptops, you can
have them. Some other electronics.

JERRY

Laptops are worthless, idiots,
and you know it. You guys get
a lot of people in and out of
(MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

here. Where's the good stuff?
I need a motorcycle to get out
of this hell hole.

(catches Lisa's glance
down a hallway)
What's back there?

AUSTIN

Where?

JERRY

That hallway. Where she looked just
now. What's back there?

AUSTIN

Nothing.

JERRY

Get moving. Back away slowly.
(aims at SEAN, AUSTIN
moves to protect)
You first.

(MORE)

Slowly they back around a corner and down a hallway. Jerry's
finger is on the trigger and there is rage in his eyes. There
is no doubt he will kill them.

They get to the end of the hallway, and he looks inside the
storage room and sees boxes of seeds. He points the gun at
Lisa.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You get the seeds. The rest
of you in the other room.

ROSS

This isn't the way. Please, let
us share our blessings.

JERRY

Shut up. Don't give me that!
I'll take what I want. I wonder
how many bandages you have.

The door in the lobby opens and November enters, pauses, listens, and hears Jerry in the distance.

She marches around the corner and towards Jerry, who is so intense on his hostages he's paying no attention to what is going on behind him.

Without slowing down November walks up and places a gun she got at the trading post at the back of his skull.

NOVEMBER

Some people just don't know when
to stop.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Three girls are casually walking down a street approaching a house. They are celebrating a rare night out. They are drunk.

TITLE OVER: Iowa City, Iowa

MANDY, 19, dark haired, tougher than she looks, is the leader of the pack. BETTY, 22, is blonde and gorgeous and stumbles a lot. KRIS, 20, is having giggle fits.

MANDY

You two are definitely a bad
influence on me. I shouldn't
have listened to you.

BETTY

Let's remember not who's idea
this was.

KRIS

Remember not?

BETTY

OK, again. Let's not remember
whose idea this was.

MANDY

You'll get it.

KRIS

Once more, with feeling.

BETTY

What were we talking about?

MANDY

I think it was Randall.

KRIS

I don't think we were talking about him. I'm sure Kris was thinking about him.

BETTY

Well, about one part of him.

(they both turn to face her)

When he smiles, I want to melt.

They burst out laughing as they turn up a walkway towards a house. Just as they get to the steps to a porch Betty looks off to one side and completely freezes in shock.

Mandy and Kris go up the steps and enter when they see her looking off. Kris sees what Betty is looking at, pauses, sobers quickly, and grabs her cell phone. She starts to dial, stops, then looks away. Mandy comes down and joins them.

KRIS

What do we do? We can't call anyone with no phones working.

Betty and Mandy walk off the steps and into an alley where a body is lying against the wall of another house.

Betty carefully pulls back a coat to reveal the bloody face of a male, 18, who had been beaten.

Kris can't bring herself any closer.

BETTY

What can we do?

Mandy looks down the alley. Something moves in the darkness.

KRIS

Who can we go to?

Mandy steps into the shadows.

INT. LOBBY AND HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jerry struggles at first but stops when he recognizes her voice. She flashes the weapon she's holding to make sure he knows who's in charge from here on.

JERRY

Damn you. You didn't shoot me before, you won't shoot me now.

NOVEMBER

That was your first warning. This time it's your last.

JERRY

With bullets so rare how do I know it's loaded?

NOVEMBER

I'm willing to take that chance. How about you?

(MORE)

Jerry thinks about it for a second, then his shoulders drop as he gives in. November pushes him face first to the floor.

NOVEMBER (CONT'D)

Are there any bungee cords or extension cords to wrap him up?

Sean nods and runs off to get them. Austin looks at the monitor but is sure there is nothing there now.

LISA

It's best if we keep him here for the night. We can take him to the police tomorrow morning.

Sean returns with some extension cords and November ties Jerry up.

NOVEMBER

(nods down hallway)
Can we lock him in one of those rooms in the back?

LISA

Yes, that should be fine.

They all gather and start to drag Jerry to the back room.

ROSS

Let's be careful with him.

NOVEMBER

Why?

No one answers. When they get to the door November picks up Jerry's gun and stashes it in her boot. She looks at her own gun and pauses.

They maneuver Jerry into the back room and prop him on his side. It is dark and there is a small light bulb on. They all exit except November, who kneels next to him with her gun pointed at him.

He glares at her, and she calmly pulls the trigger. CLICK! The hammer strikes but the gun is empty. Jerry growls at her and she leaves turning off the light as she closes the door.

November, alone in the hallway, changes the clips on the gun.

The rest have returned to the lobby. Ross is locking the main door. November joins them sliding her gun into her belt.

LISA

Thank you. I don't know what would have happened if you hadn't stopped him. Luckily you saved us. Thank you. My name is Lisa.

ROSS

Ross.

AUSTIN

Austin.

SEAN

I'm Sean.

NOVEMBER

I'm November. I dealt with that idiot when I got into town yesterday. I warned him that I'd better not see him again.

ROSS

I hope you don't feel we are all that way.

NOVEMBER

No, I don't, but there are lots of others like him out there these days.

ROSS

I believe that, deep down inside, we will always do what is best for everyone.

NOVEMBER

You'll live longer if you stop thinking that way.

LISA

You said you got into town yesterday. Where from?

NOVEMBER

I started in Albany a few weeks ago. I've been heading west since then and tried to get into Texas.

AUSTIN

We heard that the border is closed.

NOVEMBER

It is unless you are from Texas, and can prove it, or have someone from Texas who will vouch for you.

LISA

Where are you from?

NOVEMBER

Unfortunately, not from Texas.

LISA

I'm from Wisconsin, originally.
Ross and Sean were born here, you
can guess where Austin was born at.

ROSS

You didn't tell us where you
were from.

NOVEMBER

I came this way from Albany,
Georgia. I'm thinking of heading
north and following the Mississippi
up to the Midwest states.

They all look at her in amazement, even a bit of fear.

ROSS

We've been lucky here. We've
managed to survive the bombs and
everything afterwards.

NOVEMBER

I imagine you have the usual food
shortages. Lots of places do.
Hopefully it'll get better with
spring coming.

SEAN

Speaking of food. Am I the only
one who's hungry?

LISA

Well, you are always hungry, but I
have to admit, I could use something
to munch on.

(to NOVEMBER)

We'll have something. It's the least
we can do.

They exit and Austin pauses and looks at the bulletin board.
There is an advert for a support group for people who lost
their homes on 11/9. She looks at it and nods.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

ROSS

(looking down, wide eyed)
Steak, well done, with a baked
potato smothered in sour cream.

LISA

(looking down, wide eyed)
Spaghetti, meatballs, and buttered
garlic toast.

AUSTIN

(looking down, wide eyed)
Fresh lobster with butter
and scallops.

SEAN

(looking down, wide eyed)
Macaroni and cheese.

We see a counter in front of them with four empty bowls of
tomato soup, bread, and a few vegetables.

A few minutes have passed. Ross, Lisa, Austin, and Sean are
relaxing along the now clean counter as November sits in the
window.

LISA

There's a coalition of farmers
just south of Shreveport, in
DeSoto parish, that formed just
a few weeks after the bombs
dropped. Trading goods and
services for food.

The reference to DeSoto parish gets November's attention.

ROSS

Another good example of how
people can come together. They
recruited lots of men to help
farm.

NOVEMBER

I'm familiar with the area. I got
my ride there.

LISA

Also, a steady supply of salt from the Louisiana mines.

NOVEMBER

In exchange for shelter tonight I have a few supplies I can leave. Nothing fancy, mostly pretzels. It's odd, almost all of the convenience stores on the highways

(MORE)

NOVEMBER (CONT'D)

have been looted clean except for the damn pretzels. Hardly anyone wants them.

SEAN

You said ride? Please, please tell me you have a Harley!

NOVEMBER

Okay, it's a Harley.

SEAN

Best bikes on the road.

NOVEMBER

Also, high maintenance.

SEAN

Yeah, but they are HARLEYS!

NOVEMBER

Passed a dealer not far from here. I think it's called Brook Holy Drive.

LISA

Brook Hollow.

SEAN

Well, my credit is good but it'll be a while before I can start making payments.

NOVEMBER

Screw the payments. Bust in and just help yourself.

Ross shoots her a nasty look; she glares back at him. Sean smiles and debates it for a few seconds then shakes his head after glancing at Ross.

ROSS

I think we are just fine the way we are. If we need to go anywhere we can walk. We've got everything we need right here in Shreveport.

NOVEMBER

Fair enough. It's different out on the highways.

AUSTIN

It would be nice to get going a while. As safe as it is here, I have to admit I would like to see something different for a bit. I'm not sure this is safe anymore.

Ross looks at her unsettled but keeps quiet.

SEAN

You'll be safe.

AUSTIN

What's it like out there?

They look at Austin, they all thought it, then look at November.

NOVEMBER

Some places made it better than others. Montgomery is under tight martial law but they are holding together. Jacksonville wasn't so lucky.

SEAN

We heard Jacksonville wasn't hit.

NOVEMBER

It wasn't. It was what came after.
Panic, hunger, uncertainty and anger
destroyed the city. Riots, looting,
fires and nobody left to stop them.

AUSTIN

Is it all like that?

NOVEMBER

No, smaller towns, farming
communities have held together
mostly. It's also the wild
spaces in between.

AUSTIN

I just keep thinking how, as
much as I like it here, it's
not Austin. I'd like to find
some place more like home. I
remember, when we were kids,
going to the viewing stage on
the top of the Austonian.
There was also the Moonlight
Towers at night. They'd take
your breath away. There's got
to be someplace like that still
around.

ROSS

I'm sure there is, but Shreveport
can have that splendor if you
look for it. Even before the
bombs dropped this city was famous.
Legends began here. A few blocks
away is the Shreveport Auditorium
where Elvis Presley made his very
first professional appearance.

Lisa and Sean smile proudly at their city's claim to fame.
November looks confused as if she doesn't recognize the name.

SEAN

I've heard the rumors about the
ghosts. Some people say Elvis has
not left the building.

NOVEMBER

(to Austin)

Why can't you go home?

They look at her in sad surprise.

ROSS

Austin is gone. Destroyed on 11/9.

NOVEMBER

Austin wasn't hit by the bombs.
It survived.

Austin freezes in shock and she slowly looks at November.
Tears dripping down her cheeks.

AUSTIN

Austin survived...?

NOVEMBER

Just on the other side of
Montgomery, I hooked up with a
couple from Texas, Vanessa and
Raul, they were in Austin when
the bombs went off. They went
to Florida looking for family
and were headed back home
when we met.

Ross looks at her suspiciously. Sean is looking at Austin.

AUSTIN

Austin survived the bombs. I have
a home.

Austin walks out. Sean is tormented.

LISA

It makes me wonder how much else
of what we've heard is false.

ROSS

There is a common good in
all of us that must prevail.
Like the farmers in DeSoto
doing good for everyone.

LISA

We are aware, however, that some of the rules don't apply anymore.

NOVEMBER

You'll live longer if you assume none of them do. A lot of people who never had to look for food or shelter are on their own. Lots of people doing things they didn't think they'd ever have to do. Trading for clothes and food, hunting, and, sometimes, killing to survive. I saw the DeSoto organization they have. Spent a few days there. Sure, doing a good thing for you, but using brutes, guns and regular patrols to keep it going.

ROSS

Not in our world! You got your Harley there, you said so.

NOVEMBER

And guess who I let screw me to get it. Too bad he couldn't handle me.

(MORE)

Ross is almost shaking with anger. Lisa is reminded of the gun dealer. Sean is still in shock.

NOVEMBER (CONT'D)

(stands and approaches ROSS)

Some places managed to hold themselves together. Some didn't. Albany, Georgia, where I started, is a ghost town. Biker gangs, punks like Jerry, fighting like animals for control of the streets. On the highways you either travel slowly and carefully by yourself, usually at night, or you try and join a convoy. Either way, keep your weapons locked and loaded.

(MORE)

NOVEMBER (CONT'D)

The rules you've lived by don't necessarily apply anymore. Just do what you need to do to survive.

November slides Jerry's gun across the counter to Ross. He refuses to take it.

ROSS

You must be exaggerating. Things haven't changed that much. You're telling us ghost stories in the night.

NOVEMBER

Look down that hallway and tell me what happened here is just a ghost story.

LISA

She is right. Even with a city wide curfew there are still the dangerous people out in the streets after dark. He is one of them.

ROSS

So was she!

The rest of them look at November unsure of her. Ross exits.

NOVEMBER

(quietly, to Sean)
Go to Austin.

Sean exits. Lisa and November are now alone. Lisa's faith in November is shaken, looks into her eyes.

LISA

You shouldn't have been out at night either.

NOVEMBER

It can be easier to get things done.

LISA

What are you? What are you doing? First you come in here and save us, like some kind of superhero, yet you won't tell us where you are from.

NOVEMBER

Albany, I said so.

LISA

You said you started in Albany a few weeks ago. That's different.

NOVEMBER

I'm sorry. You've got it good in this town, I'm glad for you, but it's not that way everywhere and there is no guarantee it will stay that way here.

LISA

Lots of people came through here the first few weeks after the bombs. We heard lots of stories. It was weeks before we heard just how many bombs there were.

NOVEMBER

26.

LISA

We still hear 25. But we also thought one was in Austin so things are changing.

NOVEMBER

There's lots of talk.

Lisa looks at her, wanting to ask more, then looks out where Ross has gone.

LISA

He is taking it harder than he lets on.

Lisa gets up and goes after Ross. November looks down at the gun still sitting on the counter.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Jerry is sitting uncomfortably on the floor getting nowhere in undoing the ties on his wrists. He stops when the door opens, and Ross enters holding a glass of water.

ROSS

I thought you might need something.

Jerry glares at him, then nods, and Ross gives him a drink.

JERRY

Why are you being nice? I tried to rob you.

ROSS

These are difficult times. Some people are forced to do things they'd never do. Maybe, someday, you'll help somebody else.

JERRY

I can't feel my hands.

Ross looks at him unsure, then helps him turn so he can see Jerry's hands. He carefully loosens the cord a bit, then sets Jerry back in place.

ROSS

Does that feel better?

JERRY

Yes, thank you. If I'd have known you were so nice I wouldn't have tried to rob you.

ROSS

As I said, difficult times. I'm hoping, by tomorrow morning, we'll see things better in the light of day and won't have to turn you over to the police. We'll talk more then.

Ross exits and closes the door behind him leaving the light on. Jerry shakes his head and sneers.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Austin is sitting, shocked by the news. Sean approaches slowly and sits down next to her.

SEAN

What are you going to do?

AUSTIN

I'd accepted that room up there as my home. I'd gotten used to thinking of it that way. I'd stopped wishing I could go back to Austin because I thought it would never be possible. Now, thanks to November, I find out I can. I should be happy, but I'm scared.

SEAN

I sometimes think if you're not scared any more you aren't paying attention.

AUSTIN

But you never look scared.

SEAN

I'm scared all the time. I joke about things cause it keeps me from crying. That's how I get by. You, you're the brave one.

AUSTIN

(takes his hand)

I'm not brave.

SEAN

Sure, you are. You left home to come here to go to college. I never could have gone that far away. I never even left Louisiana until I was eleven and mom and

(MORE)

SEAN (CONT'D)

dad took us to Dallas. When we crossed the border I hid in the back seat under some blankets. I figured if I didn't look out of the car I could pretend I was still in Shreveport.

AUSTIN

That's silly.

SEAN

I know, nearly suffocated.

AUSTIN

(they laugh)

But you survived the strange new world of Texas.

SEAN

Always thought the next time I go back there I'll look out the window more.

AUSTIN

I'll give you a guided tour. Assuming I ever get back. With the gangs and all the things she told us. It's only 350 miles from here, but, I suppose, it could be 350,000 miles away. I don't think I could make it.

SEAN

With me you could.

Austin looks at him, holds him.

AUSTIN

But your home is here.

SEAN

There are so many places now I'll never get to see. So much is gone. I've been thinking I should try and see some of what's left out there.

AUSTIN

I don't think there's enough
gas left in my car to make it.
I don't even know if my car
will start after all these months.

SEAN

If it doesn't, I can fix it.
Better yet, I might be able
to get us one I know will
make it there.

AUSTIN

350 miles. With the speed
limit we could be there in
five and a half hours depending
on how long it takes us to
get through the border.

SEAN

From the way November talked
I get the impression the speed
limit has gone up.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ross closes the door, shuts his eyes, and whispers a few
words. He turns and is surprised Lisa is watching him.

LISA

He still tied up?

ROSS

Yes, I'm hoping to talk some
sense into him in the morning.
I'd like to give him a chance
before turning him over to
the police.

LISA

I think you'll just be better
letting the police handle it.
I'm sorry, Ross, but you can't
save everyone.

ROSS

I was a teacher before November.

LISA

And a very good one, as I recall.

ROSS

After ten years it's become a habit. I'm just so used to it.

LISA

It's like before, when I was working at the university. Every morning, five days a week, for years I was up at 6:00 to get into the office and get ready. I still do. Every morning at 6:00, even without an alarm clock, I'm up.

ROSS

I know, I miss them, too, but those are only creature comforts. Aren't we still the same inside?

LISA

Some are, some aren't. You knew before the bombs that some people couldn't be saved. Why should that be any different now? It's a brave new-. No, I honestly can't say that. It's a different world out there.

ROSS

But we must hang on to ourselves. Hang on to what we believe in.

LISA

We also have to adapt. Good or bad we must adapt to a new life after November.

ROSS

Change, even at a snail's pace, is still change.

(Lisa nods and there is a moment)

November? I should see if she wants to spend the night here and make sure we're closed up.

LISA

I'll see if we've had any
luck with the plants.

Ross exits and Lisa enters the first storage room where the plant containers are. She looks at them carefully and has a moment where she looks hopeful. Excited, she turns into the hallway to join the rest. Before she's aware a hand grabs her, Jerry tears her back and gets a hold on her with a hand on her mouth.

JERRY

Straight to the door and out!

She looks back at him frightened, nods, and he starts to maneuver her down the hall.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Jerry and his prisoner enter the lobby. Austin and Sean are still at the stairs and jump and yell.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ross hears the shout and runs past the counter, there is no gun on it.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Jerry tightens his grip on Lisa's neck, she's having trouble breathing, and backs to the door but it's locked. He pounds on it.

JERRY

Open the damn door or I'll
open it with her body!

Ross enters at a run.

ROSS

Ok, I'll unlock it, just
step back.

JERRY

Not you.
(at AUSTIN)
Her.

SEAN

I'll do it!

JERRY

NOW!

Austin holds Sean back and, with all eyes on her, takes the keys from Ross and ever so carefully unlocks the door. Lisa is gasping, losing consciousness, as Austin moves out of the way.

ROSS

Please, let her go.

JERRY

Not till I'm out of the parking lot.

November enters, her own weapon in hand and ready.

NOVEMBER

No! Let her go now!

JERRY

Don't try it. You showed me the gun was empty.

November points the gun at the ceiling and fires, then aims it back at Jerry.

NOVEMBER

Next one's yours!

(MORE)

Lisa is about to drop, and Ross is shaking with anger. Jerry considers his options.

NOVEMBER (CONT'D)

One of you is gonna be on the ground in about ten seconds.

Jerry takes a step back pushing the door open, pauses, then thrusts Lisa forward and exits with November a few seconds after him.

EXT. BUILDING PARKING LOT - NIGHT

November bursts out of the building, weapon ready, and sees that Jerry has gone around the corner to escape.

She chases after him, but he has doubled back and takes a swing at her with an old board he's found discarded by the building. Jerry aims low and hits November in the gut.

She falls onto the pavement and drops the weapon. Stunned, she looks up and sees Jerry stalking towards her ready to kill her with the board.

She sees the weapon and starts rolling towards it avoiding his strikes.

She reaches the gun and fires without aiming in Jerry's direction. The shot goes wild, but it is enough to scare Jerry and he starts running. November takes a few more shots from the ground and forces herself to get up.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Lisa is sitting on the floor; she is breathing rapidly but will be okay. Ross and Austin are comforting her, Sean returns with a glass of water. Lisa drinks it carefully.

ROSS

We need to call 9-! We'll
take you to the hospital.

LISA

No, he didn't hurt me, just
scared me.

ROSS

Then we'll walk to the police
station so they'll go after that
bastard.

AUSTIN

I think November will get him
first.

SEAN

If she doesn't I will.

They tense up as the door opens and November enters. She favors her left side where she was hit and bends over to look at Lisa.

NOVEMBER

Are you okay?

LISA

I'll be fine.

AUSTIN

Are you okay?

NOVEMBER

Some bruises, maybe a broken rib or two.

ROSS

Did you get him?

NOVEMBER

Not yet.

AUSTIN

We'll get something for you.

Austin and Sean get up and head away. Ross looks up and then follows them. November, in pain, sits on the floor next to Lisa.

LISA

Thank you.

NOVEMBER

You do what you have to do.

LISA

Were you a cop before the bombs?
A secret agent or something?

NOVEMBER

Or something.

LISA

You handled yourself like a pro.

NOVEMBER

I'll stay here on the couch
for the night in case he circles
back. I'll go looking for him
in the morning. I will find him
before I head north.

LISA

What's up north?

NOVEMBER

(pauses)

Not sure. I just want to see
what could be up there.

LISA

From the way you talk it sounds
like you're looking for something.

NOVEMBER

(lost)

Something.

Lisa is unsure of what she means. Austin, Ross, and Sean
return with some medication and water for them.

AUSTIN

Take these, they'll help.

November quickly swallows some pills and breathes deeply.

ROSS

Things will be different now.

Austin and Sean look at each other and nod. They turn to Ross
and Lisa.

AUSTIN

I'm going home.

SEAN

I'm going to make sure she
gets there.

EXT. CITY ALLEY - NIGHT

Jerry is looting through some things he's found. Tossing some things aside carelessly. Jerry is pleased with his find and stands but stops as a bright light comes on and blinds him.

He tries to cover his eyes to see. There is glaring bright light and he can't see who's holding it.

JERRY

Turn the damn thing off!

Something slides in front of the light, it's the nozzle of a weapon.

The weapon fires, striking Jerry, and he drops to the ground. He takes a few breaths as the killer walks toward him, then stops breathing.

The light goes out and Ross is standing with the gun in his hand. He looks down at the dead Jerry, not happy but not guilty either, then walks away.

There is movement in the shadows behind him and November steps out, watches him leave, smiles knowingly, then turns away.

CUT TO BLACK