

AFTERMATH 105

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BARREN NUCLEAR WASTELAND - NIGHT

A dark sky shows signs of dawn atop the rolling desert of Arizona.

The growing light illuminates a landscape of windswept wreckage, partial roads and the occasional shell of a building long since vacated.

There is no sign of life.

A fragmented blacktop drops suddenly into a ravine, across which stands a mountainous sand dune.

Beyond the dune, behind a steel fence sits a squat bunker-like building.

Across the big steel gates that seal the fence, daubed in a hurried hand are the six foot tall, bright red letters that read:

AFTERMATH 105

INT. JACK'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

JACK 'KRAY-ZEE' JONES, 56 years old, lies motionless on a lower bunk, eyes tight, but not sleeping. A disheveled shadow of the radio celebrity he once was, an exiled, stubbly, sweaty has-been.

Right now SWEATY is the most noticeable thing about him, he is drenched, his hair is dripping and his Pink Floyd t-shirt clings to him in that most uncomfortable way.

His eyes snap open, he sits bolt upright and wipes his head with his hands.

ADAM stands across the room arms folded and leaning up against the wall. He looks younger than Jack, around 33 years, a dirty denim jacket sets off his salt and pepper hair.

ADAM
Soaked again Jack.

Jack pulls the drenched t-shirt over his head, balls it up and wipes his body with it. A greenstone Koru pendant flops back against his chest, the spiral dark against his pale skin.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Huh, still wearing Shane's trinket?
Lost mine, don't know when.

Jack sips an off-colour glass of water and stares blankly at the disaster of a bedroom around him, doing his best to ignore the younger man.

JACK
Coffee time.

He winces as he stands and takes those first few painful morning steps toward the door.

Adam is nowhere to be seen.

EXT. THE STATION ROOF - DAY

The flat roof of the station houses the studio and the Station Manager's office it also provides external access with a wonderful view of the sunrise.

The metal door slaps open and Jack breathes in the early morning dust-filled air.

He approaches a figure sat quietly on a rotten old armchair.

JACK
Shane.

SHANE, 49 years old, the station engineer turns his mirrored sunglasses to see Jack. Maori borne from New Zealand seeing out his days in post apocalyptic Arizona was not the Overseas Experience he planned as a youth.

SHANE
Bro.

JACK
Not sleepin' again?

SHANE
Summin like that, got the munchies, got up, came out here, had a smoke, fell asleep again, then you woke me up.

JACK
Yeah sorry, the door needs attention. Squeaky.

SHANE
I heard.

JACK
I'll tell the engineer.

SHANE
I'll get to it. Later.

A small tinny speaker on the wall relays the studio music to the rooftop audience.

JACK

Bang on time same old tape.

A song from another age sells the virtue of a beautiful day.

SHANE

Thought I heard Eric in the studio earlier.

JACK

No, he was still tucked up with Viola when I got up.

SHANE

Maybe rats.

JACK

There are no rats. Anywhere. Anymore.

SHANE

Maybe there are, out there.

Shane waves at the rolling desert.

JACK

I'm making an educated guess.

Shane's mirrored sunglasses eye up Jack's drink.

SHANE

Got any beers?

JACK

You know the answer to that.

SHANE

Just askin' Cuzz.

JACK

Maybe if you hadn't drunk them all in the first ten years, Cuzz.

Jack sips the bitter coffee.

SHANE

Ten years Bro? True?

JACK

Ten since you drank the beer dry, about four since you stopped sharing your weed and twenty...

He is pausing to calculate, a realisation dawns.

JACK (CONT'D)
Man, that's crazy.

SHANE
What?

JACK
Almost to the day, twenty years
since the world officially ended.

SHANE
Twenty years locked up in this
shithole of a station?

JACK
Twenty years since we saw an
outsider and twenty long years
pumpin' out the vibes to nobody
that ain't listenin' anyway.

SHANE
Happy anniversary then.

JACK
Nothing happy about it.

Jack lifts his coffee and takes a slug.

JACK (CONT'D)
Thanks anyway, you too I guess.

Shane raises an index finger.

SHANE
What about Evie?

JACK
Huh.

SHANE
Evie. She was an outsider.

JACK
Shut up. You know how I feel about
Evie.

SHANE
She don't count?

JACK
She never did...Bitch.

SHANE
Amen.

Shane crosses his arms behind his head and settles in.

SHANE (CONT'D)
 Messes with your head eh bro,
 twenty years. Could have murdered
 someone and been home by now.

JACK
 I know a few candidates.

SHANE
 Man, when I got on a plane to see
 the world, never thought I'd end up
 somewhere like this.

JACK
 Glad you did if it helps.

SHANE
 Yeah, but as a case of bad timing,
 it rates.

JACK
 Wrong place, but hey, you survived
 the big bang, counts for something.

SHANE
 True, eh. Sometimes I wish I knew
 what happened to my whanu, you
 know?

JACK
 Don't we all.

Jack pats the spiral greenstone beneath his shirt.

JACK (CONT'D)
 New beginnings.

SHANE
 New beginnings.

Shane lifts his pendant to his lips.

SHANE (CONT'D)
 True.

A dust storm approaches.

JACK
 I'm going inside, you?

SHANE
 Nah mate, sittin tight, this stuff,
 it's good for me skin yunnaw, me
 complexion.

JACK
Do me a favour?

SHANE
What?

JACK
Just remember what I said about
falling asleep out here, especially
with a smoke.

SHANE
Sorry Uncle.

Jack slips back inside through the outer door with a wink.
Shane can be heard laughing at the howling wind.

INT. UPPER LANDING - CONTINUOUS

At the top of the stairs this small area provides access to the roof, the studio and the Station Manager's Office.

Jack moves forward from the door to the glass wall that looks in on the studio.

The lights are on, the desk is empty and his ears are waiting for him, dangling on the microphone boom. He glances at the clock.

Jack heads downstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Sitting at a table big enough for ten people, Jack is absently probing his armpit with one hand, second coffee attached to the other.

VIOLA bustles past, 53 years old, a hefty Texan with Jamaican heritage, surviving years as the bitterly under estimated station cook, she has the wiles of a hungry coyote and a thirst for control.

VIOLA
How's our grumpy daytime host
today?

Jack ignores her piercing stare.

VIOLA (CONT'D)
(leaning in close)
I said.

JACK
I heard you the first time.

VIOLA
So?

JACK
Peachy.

VIOLA
What's for breakfast?

JACK
You're supposed to be the cook, V.

VIOLA
Not for you Mister. You had your
privileges revoked long time ago,
oh yes.

JACK
You're also supposed to be cleaning
the place too. Forget about that?

VIOLA
I'm busy enough with Eric, we don't
get paid, so I don't need to do any
extra.

JACK
We don't have to live like animals
either.

VIOLA
Whatchu sayin' Jonesy?

JACK
Look at the place, its a sty and
since I'm the only one spending any
time in the studio, I don't
understand why you lot can't keep
the place lookin' decent.

Viola looks like she is ready to unleash thunder, then sucks
it back up and storms out of the kitchen. He watches her
round behind thump its way out of the kitchen.

Waits until she is gone then shouts in her direction.

JACK (CONT'D)
Waitress! Oh waitress I'll take the
powdered egg protein
omelette...Again.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

The bathroom is dull like every other room in the bunker, it was never luxurious, but it was clean once. Jack steps up to the mottled mirror, the reflection reveals the bath behind him, where MAGGIE drinks red wine nestled into foam up to her neck.

MAGGIE, 57 years old is the nighttime host, a dusky voice carries the late show with grace while her plummy Englishness belies her ability to embarrass a swearing sailor.

This is a daily ritual for them both.

MAGGIE
Morning JJ.

She raises her glass.

JACK
Celebrating another successful shift?

MAGGIE
It's the only way to fly love.

JACK
Midnight callers?

Shakes her head.

MAGGIE
Shane popped in, couldn't sleep, I helped him along.

Jack raises a hand.

JACK
Enough information thanks.

Jack is setting up his morning ablutions, facecloth, razor, soap.

He runs the faucet in the sink, it slowly fills with an off colour water. He shakes his head.

MAGGIE
Here it comes.

JACK
Here what comes?

MAGGIE
Your daily bitching about the plumbing.

JACK

Sorry to be so predictable Duchess.

He splashes his face with the water.

MAGGIE

Hey, a thousand times already,
Shane fixed me up to a pure source,
he can't fix your sink.

JACK

Doesn't add up.

MAGGIE

He's the engineer Jack, not you.
Besides I fuck him and you don't.

JACK

Like that's the answer.

MAGGIE

It could be one of them, he's very
accommodating...You know.

JACK

Shove it Maggie.

MAGGIE

Predictable, see? At least we're on
the right track now.

Jack starts to shave.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I know all about you, Jack. I've
studied you.

She pauses to savour a sip of wine.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You will shave for the next three
minutes, during which time I will
take around four drinks from this
glass of delightful Cabernet.

He looks up.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

When I drink, your eyes will flick
up and try to capture a view of my
nipples as my breasts struggle
against the foam.

JACK

I don't even...

She lifts her wine glass and takes a gulp of the deep red

liquid, his eyes drift before he shakes himself free.

MAGGIE
Predictable. Hey, you said it
first.

JACK
I'm not playing your games Maggie.

MAGGIE
But face it ace, you did.

He towels his face, looks at his toothbrush and then the
dirty water.

JACK
Fuckit.

He slips the brush back into his washbag.

MAGGIE
Have some of mine, it's fresh.

JACK
No.

MAGGIE
It's only had me in it.

JACK
Maggie, stop. Just leave it.

MAGGIE
I didn't pee, honest.

JACK
You, being in that bath is the
exact reason I don't want to dip my
toothbrush in it. Thanks.

He closes his eyes, then looks at her again in the mirror.

JACK (CONT'D)
No offense.

She drains the red wine from her glass.

MAGGIE
None taken. Aren't you on soon?

JACK
Not exactly running to schedule are
we?

MAGGIE
Bob thinks we are.

JACK
Bob?

MAGGIE
Yeah, Bob.

JACK
Bob won't talk to me.

He packs away his things and straightens his t-shirt.

JACK (CONT'D)
Bob's out of touch.

MAGGIE
Well he talks to me. Talks to me about you.

JACK
Great, just great. What's his beef Maggie? Really.

MAGGIE
He's just doin' the Station Manager thing.

JACK
Well he can start with the Great Dane.

She looks momentarily confused.

MAGGIE
What's Eric got to do with this?

JACK
He hasn't pulled a shift in at least five years, his tapes are fading out they've been replayed that many times.

MAGGIE
Well his auto tapes are pretty good.

JACK
They were when he started, but then you don't hear it do you? Day after day, while you sit pretty in here in your clean bathwater.

Jack takes one last look at her in the mirror.

JACK (CONT'D)
I'm done.

He moves to the door, he holds onto the frame and stares at

his feet.

JACK (CONT'D)

Did Bob say what he wanted?

MAGGIE

Programming, fresh ideas, changing up the focus. Usual bullshit.

JACK

Oh.

MAGGIE

Don't take it to heart Jack.

JACK

I realised something today.

MAGGIE

What's that?

JACK

Twenty years we've been here Maggie, to the day, twenty fuckin' years.

MAGGIE

Well?

JACK

It's a milestone, an event, you have to wonder why we go on doing this? Nobody has ever come, nobody has ever called in.

MAGGIE

There was somebody.

JACK

We don't talk about that bitch. Besides, she was never a listener, never even heard one single show.

MAGGIE

So what you goin' to do about it Jack?

JACK

About what? Evie?

MAGGIE

No, your big ass twenty years.

JACK

I don't know, nobody else seems bothered.

MAGGIE

You're right, we're not, we're past it, we're way past anything.

JACK

No, you're right, it's just business as fuckin' usual, here in the dustbowl playing dead music to a dead world.

MAGGIE

Jack.

JACK

Yeah.

MAGGIE

Get the fuck over yourself and get in that studio, it's your slot and you need to be there.

He nods and leaves with sloping shoulders.

She shouts after him.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(Shouting)

Or make a bloody cake.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

The boom swings close, Jack moves a slider on the console then starts talking.

JACK

Well thanks to Doctor Eric for another stunning selection of nineties softrock...What a Great Dane. Oh and I almost forgot...GOOD MORNING WASTELAND!

Takes a drink.

JACK (CONT'D)

So, today is a special day here at Aftermath one-o-five. We are in full on party lockdown, any guesses why?

He swirls the remaining drink in his cup.

JACK (CONT'D)

No...I didn't think so, well since you asked, today is the twentieth anniversary of our station being on the air. Serving you, the wasteland
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
community. Assuming of course there
actually is any community out there
that has a single working radio
between them.

He weighs up a weathered tennis ball and starts rolling it in
his hands.

JACK (CONT'D)
Personally for today at least, I'm
not bothered in who's listening, I
want to celebrate this milestone, I
want to get drunk, get laid, party
all night and give you the coke
fuelled show of my life tomorrow.

A long pause.

JACK (CONT'D)
But there's none of that going to
happen, 'cause nobody else here
really gives a rats and tomorrow
will be. Just. Another. Day.

He bounces the ball from palm to bicep and back, fumbles it,
re-catches it. Almost spilling his drink.

JACK (CONT'D)
And talking of days, even though I
heard it earlier on Doctor Eric's
dreadful tape, here's that song
about having a beautiful day
again...Besides, we stopped paying
royalties twenty years ago, so I
could put it on all day long if I
felt like it.

He slides a mixer and fades himself out.

He tosses the ball a few times, then for the duration the
song throws it at a wall across the studio.

It bounces back to his hand, he stops throwing and pulls the
slider back.

JACK (CONT'D)
I'm back wasteland...I'd like to
say Crazy Cop Rockatansky rang in
and dedicated that song to his dear
friend Toecutter, but I can't.
Because we don't live in that kind
of Apocalypse, which is a shame,
because I always fancied myself
driving a car covered in spikes.

He levers a wedge of ancient gum off the underside of the
desk, and inspects it like a hidden treasure.

JACK (CONT'D)

While we load up the next tune for this stunning yet dusty Arizona day, I'll just run by the party info one more time. Remember if you qualify as a listener, then you are invited.

He bites the gum like a gold nugget, then flings it across the room.

JACK (CONT'D)

To qualify as a listener, you need to have heard this show...Just listen out for the contact jingle that plays all day every day on the fifteen minutes, starting from now.

He fades in the jingle and sits back for a few seconds, before putting himself back on.

JACK (CONT'D)

You want coordinates? You got 'em. You want a phone number to ring? You got it. You wanna join a party filled with celebrities, hot chicks and alcohol? - you might be a little disappointed. Let's have a quick blast folks, how about we party like it's 1999?

Another song, and few minutes with the ball for Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)

I had an epiphany today, I think. I'm assuming people know who I'm talking about when I mention 'The Duchess'. If not, then shame on you, what do you do in the middle of the night? Sleep? You should be listening to our midnight host Maggie. It's a safe bet she has the sexiest voice on radio in the world these days and doesn't hold back...Well we were talking this morning, she was naked, that's not important, but I like you to know how I spend me time off air. So we were talking and she suggested that I make a cake...You know what I think I might just do that. I mean, if I can find some flour and re-hydrate enough milk powder and egg protein. I guess it'll taste like shit, but hey, when was the last time any of you people baked a cake?

Jack drains his coffee.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Okay, the bad news is that I have
 run out of coffee, the good news is
 that you get three tracks back to
 back while I refuel. Back soon
 Wastelanders.

He fades himself off and spins out of his chair.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jack sweeps into the kitchen and refills his coffee, Viola
 and ERIC sit at the table together.

ERIC, 51 years old, as conflicted as his fiery red hair and
 bright orange vest, he is a tightly wound athletic spring,
 barely containing his urges to bait Jack.

VIOLA
 Jack's back.

ERIC
 Morning tea already?

JACK
 Jack needs fuel.

ERIC
 I don't know how you do it, keep
 going I mean.

JACK
 What else can I do Eric? Once I get
 behind the mike I can at least
 pretend there's a world outside.

VIOLA
 Well we appreciate it.

JACK
 Great.

A moment passes.

JACK (CONT'D)
 So what was one of the five last
 songs I played V?

She looks at him blankly.

JACK (CONT'D)
 I would hope that saying something
 like that would suggest you even--

ERIC
Jack! Stop.

JACK
The audience appreciates Eric, you know that. At least you used to.

ERIC
Stop.

JACK
What about you? C'mon Eric.

ERIC
I said stop.

JACK
When was it Eric?

A sip of coffee.

JACK (CONT'D)
You know, the last time you sat in the big chair?

ERIC
Bob said...

JACK
Bob...BOB!

He closes his eyes and gathers himself.

JACK (CONT'D)
You're all so keen to share Bob's opinion, except I'm the only one that can't pin him down.

VIOLA
Sleeps late, then you're in the studio--

JACK
I'm sorry. I thought THE STATION MANAGER would actually VISIT THE SHOW OCCASIONALLY!

Shane enters and drapes himself over the kitchen bench.

SHANE
Wass the noise bro?

ERIC
Jack's tired.

JACK

What!?

ERIC

You've been working it hard Jack,
you need some down time. Come see
me later, let's sort you out.

SHANE

Eric? Is that an open invitation?

ERIC

No.

SHANE

Shit.

ERIC

For the last time. There is nothing
recreational in the pharmacy
cabinet.

Jack has moved to the door shaking his head.

JACK

Don't know what the actual fuck
just happened here. I really don't.

Shane stands over Viola and looks at the book she was reading
with Eric.

SHANE

Wassat?

VIOLA

A medical something, Eric was
reading it. My brain was somewhere
else.

Eric is stares at Jack.

ERIC

A medical journal, just looking.

He crosses his athletic arms behind his head.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Jack. You are the station, your
show has the biggest potential
demographic. I mean its not like
people are driving to work anymore
is it?

Jack shakes his head.

ERIC (CONT'D)
What's wrong, really?

JACK
It's nothin.

He takes a moment to realise they are all staring at him.

VIOLA
He's lonely.

JACK
No I'm not.

VIOLA
He is.

JACK
Stopping this right here, I'm out.

SHANE
Jack needs some luvin.

JACK
Shane! Just leave it, I'm--

He spies a shadowy figure in a far doorway.

Jack points at the doorway.

JACK (CONT'D)
BOB!

The crew look confused, the large figure detaches from the doorway and slips away.

Jack hurries after the figure, careful not to slop his drink.

SHANE
Bob? For real? I thought you were--

Jack gives a disparaging glance as he scurries past and cuts Shane short with a friendly tap across his head.

INT. OUTSIDE BOB'S DOOR - DAY

Jack rounds the corner and comes face to face with Bob's closed door.

JACK
Bob!

Nothing.

Jack rattles the door with his knuckles.

JACK (CONT'D)
Bob, I know you're in there. Look
we need to talk. About the show.

He puts his head on the door.

JACK (CONT'D)
I saw you Bob, you can't just hide
from me, come on, talk to me.

He listens...nothing...Not even a pin drop.

JACK (CONT'D)
Ok. You're making me do this,
again. You talk to Maggie and the
others, but you keep ignoring me. I
don't know what's going on, but for
once don't just be a man, be a
manager.

Jack pulls a folded note from his pocket.

JACK (CONT'D)
I've gotta get back on air Bob, but
I'm slipping some ideas under the
door. Take a look, drop into the
show. Let's catch up, yes?

He steps back adding some distance.

JACK (CONT'D)
Okay, I'm going now.

He stomps on the spot, getting quieter.

Waits for a reaction that doesn't come.

JACK (CONT'D)
Ok, really going now.

Jack turns for the studio, he sees Adam watching him from the
stairwell, grinning.

JACK (CONT'D)
What?

Adam just shakes his head and laughs a little.

JACK (CONT'D)
Whatever.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Jack slumps into his seat, coffee in hand.

JACK

Aaaaaand we're back Wasteland. How was it for you? I...I, just don't...

He fades into a thousand yard stare, lost.

Jack is gaping like a fish, Maggie walks past the glass wall of the studio and waves, she catches his eye and mimes a wind up with her hands.

Jack snaps back.

JACK (CONT'D)

...sorry folks, had a slight hitch there, a momentary lapse of concentration. I drifted out of the zone, but thanks to our Duchess of the night I'm back.

More coffee.

JACK (CONT'D)

Did I tell you I'm gonna make a cake today? No? Well I am, as soon as the show is over I'll be trawling the remains of our storeroom looking for things to put in it.

His hand drifts to his armpit, absently probing.

JACK (CONT'D)

It might actually be my first bake, well...in ever, so I would of course welcome any calls from listeners willing to help me out. Recipes, ingredients, anything that can help me finish today with a moist, gooey, decadent chocolate cake.

He punches a button on the console.

JACK (CONT'D)

Time for an interlude, let's see who actually does want to rule the world, while I sit on the studio telephone awaiting all your calls. Ready? Set? Aaaaannnd GO!

Fades himself out and the music in.

Jack spends the song staring at a dusty red telephone sat on the desk.

JACK (CONT'D)

Well thanks for nothing Wasteland, not one caller, nuthin, nada, zip...just once, somebody, anybody, ring in. I've got this special phone you see, just sitting here waiting for some action. In the early days it'd ring now and again, but that was mostly line faults, mostly. So when I say, I'm sitting here watching the phone, I really am watching the phone.

A drink.

JACK (CONT'D)

It would make my decade if I could hear this thing ring, assuming you have a radio AND a working telephone. To be able to talk to somebody other than the crew, to have a sense that we are doing the right thing here.

He sits back for a moment, scratches his chin, probes his armpit.

JACK (CONT'D)

You know something? I see things, I have an imaginary friend. A shadow of somebody I knew well, often there in a room, sometimes talking to me. It's not like I respond, I mean, I'm not actually crazy, yet.

He vigorously rubs an eye.

JACK (CONT'D)

Adam?.. I wonder. Are you still out there?

He looks away for a moment to the slit of a window.

JACK (CONT'D)

If you are listening, if you did get to a safe place, let me know pal, let me rest...look, I'm not feeling too hot guys, I think I need to close up early today, so lets rock out to some soul. I've got something of a mash up here, winding up with a destination anywhere, so without further ado, this has been Jack 'Kray-zee' Jones from Aftermath105 for all you Wastelanders...catch y'all tomorrow.

He slides in the music and drops his head into his hands for a loooooooooong moment.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Jack is folded into a weathered leather armchair a muted DVD plays some explosive World War Two action, he stares at the shelves of books around him. Maggie stands behind his chair, leaning over it.

MAGGIE
You ok Jack?

JACK
Huh?

MAGGIE
You wound up the show over an hour early, are you okay?

JACK
I hope so. It's...it's nuthin.

MAGGIE
You not feelin' yourself?

JACK
Just having a moment Duchess.

MAGGIE
You mentioned Adam today, it's been a while since you last did that.

JACK
Oh Maggie, I didn't realise you listened?

MAGGIE
Most days.

She plays with her hair.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
When I can. In the corridor.

JACK
I see him Maggie, Adam, it's getting more often.

MAGGIE
Honey, Adam is a long time gone. Where? Where do you see him?

JACK
All around, mostly in my room or the studio.

MAGGIE

What does he say?

JACK

What does it matter. I'm not going mad, I know that much. Just seems so real, I ignore him, don't answer, but he's right there.

MAGGIE

You've a lot on your mind Jack, it's probably a phase. Probably.

JACK

Yeah, maybe it's this anniversary stuff, we've had milestones before, but twenty years...it just got me thinking.

MAGGIE

Hey, less thinking, you're a DJ for Chrissake. You just open your mouth and let the drivel spill out.

JACK

Not tonight, tonight I am a baker of cakes.

MAGGIE

Without ingredients or a half decent oven.

JACK

I have a roadmap, a clipping from Viola's Arizona Baking Anthology circa 2009. I have a microwave limping into retirement. I have most of the ingredients in some powdered form or other and intend to scour the storeroom for a scrap of chocolate that is probably two decades over its shelf life.

He holds up the clipping, she peers close.

JACK (CONT'D)

What could go wrong? Possibly?

MAGGIE

Hmmm.

JACK

What?

MAGGIE

Butter.

JACK

Wait n see. I'm on a mission.

He pushes out of his chair, she stands close.

MAGGIE

Jack, if you need to talk, if there's anything on your mind. You always have my attention.

Jack looks away.

JACK

Thanks.

He leaves her where she stands.

INT. STOREROOM - DAY

The cavernous storeroom is a deep array of industrial shelves that are mostly empty, here and there a half empty box lies askew. Jack scours the shelves while Viola watches from the doorway.

JACK

It's here, I saw it, I know I did.

VIOLA

Jack, if there were chocolate here I'd have smelt it long ago.

JACK

It was about six months ago, when I found the last box of crackers. It fell down behind the shelf, thought nothing of it then, being a savoury guy.

He gets on the floor and shines his torch beneath the dusty shelves.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh my.

VIOLA

What's that JJ?

He slips his hand under the shelving, it comes out black with dust.

JACK

A jar of wieners, hah! Meat!

He admires the jar of preserved sausage for a moment. Then dives back in.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Aaaaaaand one block of slightly
 misshapen unbranded chocolate.

VIOLA
 No.

JACK
 Oh yeaaaaaa.

He holds up both treasures, she bounces with girlish
 enthusiasm.

JACK (CONT'D)
 No. It's going in my cake.

VIOLA
 But Jack, it's chocolate, imagine
 how it would taste, imagine the
 euphoria, Jack, you have to eat
 some.

JACK
 No. I found it, I decide what
 happens to it. Besides, it's this
 that I want.

He cracks the jar of sausage.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Smell that V.

He draws deeply, then chokes a little.

Viola scrunchies her face and flaps a hand.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Well, I guess they'd be a little
 funky.

VIOLA
 Promise me they ain't going near
 your mouth JJ.

JACK
 Well, they have to. Never ate a dog
 that could kill me.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Night brings flickering neon light to the kitchen, the
 surfaces look even more dirty now. The microwave DINGS its
 readiness and Jack leaps from his chair.

JACK
Hey, come see my greatness.

Viola and Eric look up from their whispers at the far end of the table.

ERIC
Oh, I'm looking forward to this.

VIOLA
Don't get too excited lover, I know what's in there.

JACK
Heretics.

Jack pulls the steaming cake from the microwave. It's not pretty.

ERIC
It's not pretty.

JACK
Doesn't matter if it tastes good.

ERIC
I'm tasting with my eyes. I'm out.

VIOLA
Jack, it looks bad, real bad.

JACK
Whaddya expect with powdered ingredients and twenty year old chocolate?

He pushes a finger at the sticky, lumpy mess.

JACK (CONT'D)
You don't have to, I mean I did make it for all of us, but you don't have to.

VIOLA
Thanks.

JACK
Whatever, I'm going in.

He plates a slice and sits down. She watches intently.

JACK (CONT'D)
Stop staring.

VIOLA
How is it?

JACK
That's for me to know.

He stubbornly swallows the most disgusting cake on earth that day.

JACK (CONT'D)
It's my party and I'll die if I want to.

VIOLA
Well, I guess anything tastes good after those wieners.

ERIC
Wieners?

VIOLA
We found a jar under some shelving in the storeroom.

JACK
We? I found a jar and I ate them, all of them.

ERIC
Nice.

JACK
They were.

VIOLA
You could have shared, with Eric I mean.

JACK
Why? We haven't had anything in common for years, least of all an appreciation for food.

ERIC
Jack...

JACK
Jack nothing.

Jack locks eyes with Eric for a second.

JACK (CONT'D)
You cared once. You were a good host Eric, you were entertaining. Now you're just a pale imitation of a man I used to like.

He scoops up the plate and SLAMS it into the far wall.

JACK (CONT'D)
 And that's what I get for trying to
 bring a little joy into your lab
 rat fucking lives.

A quiet moment as they all watch the cake slide down the wall.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Happy anniversary.

He stands and takes his surviving piece.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Gonna go see Maggie.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Jack slides along the wall opposite the glass of the studio, Maggie is at the desk. Eyes closed and head back, she appears to be enjoying her music.

Jack moves to open the door, cake in hand, when Shane's head rises from beneath the desk. They collapse together, Shane lifts Maggie onto the desk, as they grind into the mixer Maggie opens her eyes and pierces Jack with her stare.

His hand recoils from the door, suddenly Adam is there, right at his shoulder.

The younger man leans in to whisper.

ADAM
 They want you gone. You know.
 They've had enough of you Jack,
 your energy, they want you to go
 away and die somewhere else.

Jack steps back out of view and slides down the wall to sit with his eyes tight.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 They want peace Jack.

Jack opens his eyes, Adam has gone as suddenly as he appeared.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

The kitchen is empty, Jack is alone apart from the open bottle of scotch in front of him. He flicks angrily through the book on the table.

JACK
You can come in Shane.

The big man ambles in to the tune of his slapping sandals.

SHANE
Its late bro.

JACK
Funnily enough, not sleepy. I
thought you were with Maggie?

SHANE
Oh, I was, just heading back to the
workshop for some zzzzzz's.

Shane slips back his mirror shades.

SHANE (CONT'D)
Whatcha drinkin?

JACK
Looks like Scotch to me.

He picks up the tumbler and skulls the remains of his
measure, his grimace a picture as the liquid goes down.

SHANE
May I?

JACK
Nap. Its mine Shaney Boy, all mine,
my precious and you can't have it.

SHANE
You sure? Just a sniff for a
brother?

JACK
I might be ready to quit this
joint, but I ain't stupid enough to
let you loose near this bottle.

SHANE
So, that was your book?

JACK
Might be.

SHANE
Why you checkin up on cancer
symptoms?

JACK
I just needed something to read. To
help me sleep.

SHANE

Known you long enough to know that's bull bro. Not exactly bedtime reading.

JACK

Don't worry yourself. How was Maggie?

SHANE

Sweet as. That cake?

Shane points at the leftovers on the wall.

JACK

Yep, Jack 'Kray-zee' Jones fucks it up again.

SHANE

Well if it was still on the plate...

JACK

Man I'm tired.

SHANE

You don't look so good.

JACK

Been a big day.

Jack picks up his glass and his bottle and heads for the doorway.

JACK (CONT'D)

Shane, I'm sick.

SHANE

How sick?

JACK

I'm not a doctor, but I'm pretty sure it's a permanent condition.

SHANE

Sorry bro.

JACK

What can you do?

SHANE

You talked to Eric? He's the healthiest dude I know.

JACK

I'm working it out.

SHANE

You sure?

JACK

Shane yes I'm...night.

Shane watches as Jack steps from view, then a moment later comes back looking at his feet.

JACK (CONT'D)

The sweats are the worst, I wake up drenched, freezing cold in this fucking heat. I sleep on towels, when I can sleep.

Shane is impassive.

JACK (CONT'D)

I've got a tennis ball lump in my armpit and regardless of my diet my weight is dropping off.

He takes a gulp from the bottle.

JACK (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'm pretty convinced.

Jack raises his glass to Shane.

JACK (CONT'D)

New beginnings.

He leaves this time for good, Shane can only watch him go.

INT. BATHROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Maggie is in the bath complete with bubbles and a fine red wine. Jack stares at himself in the mirror.

MAGGIE

Have you talked to Eric yet?

JACK

Shane spoke to you?

MAGGIE

He did, but I had a fair idea JJ. I pay attention to you, remember?

JACK

In answer to your question, no, I haven't. I'd rather not.

MAGGIE

You could have a look in his magic cupboard, he may have something,

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 painkillers at least.

JACK
 I'm not in pain Maggie, and it's
 not like I'm going to kill myself
 is it?

MAGGIE
 Stranger things have happened
 around here.

He drifts off for a moment, staring at the bubbles around
 her.

JACK
 That's not my style Duchess.

MAGGIE
 Just promise me you'll talk to him
 at least? You used to be good
 friends.

JACK
 It's been too many years now, Eric
 and I, well, we just don't see eye
 to eye anymore.

MAGGIE
 Is that judgment based on his
 hiatus from the show or your being
 afraid of Viola?

JACK
 Maybe, or maybe I'll never forgive
 him.

MAGGIE
 She played us all Jack, me
 included. Don't forget it. I
 thought about going with them you
 know, Adam drew a map. Evie had the
 plan, pillow talk always got her
 tongue loose. I could have gone,
 vanished in the night like
 phantoms.

JACK
 And you stayed for Shane.

Maggie shakes her head.

MAGGIE
 I stayed because my show had to go
 on. We might have lost our way, but
 we used to believe in the mission
 we had.

She sips her wine.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Anyway, Adam wasn't much more than a boy and however tender Evie could be I didn't trust her. I stayed here with some real men for company.

JACK

I saw.

MAGGIE

I saw you too, should have come in Jack, or was it too late?

JACK

You know, there was a time I thought I could love you Maggie, there was a time I hoped we could--

She laughs him out.

MAGGIE

And do what Jack, go on a date? Catch a movie, go for dinner? You've always been deluded, there's no sentiment or romance in the world anymore.

JACK

I don't think--

MAGGIE

Here, in this life, in this place, we just survive day by bloody day and sometimes that means a little pleasure can get you by. I never needed anybody's emotional drama.

Jack shaves in silence.

JACK

Shut up and drink your wine, I'm trying to see your tits.

They both laugh, friends again.

MAGGIE

Now that sounds like a man that'll be feeling himself soon enough.

INT. MEDICAL ROOM - DAY

A bare, small room marked mainly by the white cabinet and its red cross.

ERIC
How long have the sweats been
running for?

Jack sits on the single bed, Eric stands in front of him.

JACK
On and off a couple of weeks.

ERIC
Hmmm. Any other noticeable
symptoms? Dizziness, fatigue, pain.

JACK
No real pain, I get tired, but
nothing that's holding me back.

ERIC
In my opinion as a non-doctor it
sounds like you have developed
something, but pinning it down here
is impossible Jack.

JACK
I know.

ERIC
It could be any one of a vast array
of illnesses, not all of them are
cancer, but at this stage from what
I know and what you are telling me,
yes, I think maybe, probably.

JACK
What can I do?

ERIC
If there was still a world out
there, blood tests, specialists,
therapy.

JACK
If.

He looks away, at Eric, then the cabinet.

JACK (CONT'D)
That word again.

ERIC
How are you Jack, mentally?

JACK
What a stupid fucking question.

ERIC
Okay, are you angry?

JACK
I will be if this interrogation carries on. What I need is something to help me sleep, get through a night of sweats with a little rest.

ERIC
Jack, we don't have an extensive complement of supplies you know that.

Jack's brow turns stony.

ERIC (CONT'D)
However, top shelf, the blue tub. Take two before bed. You'll feel a little wobbly in the morning, but they should help.

Jack hops off the bed and opens the cabinet.

JACK
Where?

ERIC
Top shelf, next to the red tub. Don't ever take the red tub, too many of those and even princess charming wouldn't be able to get you back up.

JACK
There is no red tub, ah, here.

He shakes out two of the pills from the blue bottle and slides it back. There's a dust ring where the red tub should have been.

ERIC
No red tub...No matter. Pop those two in that bag, keep them 'til later.

JACK
Eric, I want to keep things quiet as possible, let's try and maintain a normal front.

ERIC
I don't even remember what normal is Jack.

JACK
So who took 'em?

ERIC
Eh?

JACK
The red tub, the danger pills. Who
do you think is knocking them back?
Shane?

ERIC
Don't worry yourself about that
Jack, I'll work it out.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Jack slides into his studio chair with a thump, he reaches over and flicks the light switch.

Nothing.

Again, flicks the switch.

Nothing.

JACK
Crap.

He takes a closer look at the desk.

JACK (CONT'D)
Oh, double crap.

He sticks his head out the glass door and bellows.

JACK (CONT'D)
SHANE!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jack bursts into the kitchen, Eric and Maggie are hanging out.

JACK
Where's Shane?

ERIC
Not here.

JACK
Maggie?

MAGGIE
What's up?

JACK
Studio's down, no power. Where's
Shane?

MAGGIE
He was around, have you tried the
roof?

JACK
Shit.

Jack runs back upstairs.

EXT. THE STATION ROOF - DAY

Shane sleeps in his blackened armchair when Jack bursts onto
the roof.

He doesn't stir.

JACK
Shane!

Like a baby.

JACK (CONT'D)
Shane! Wake up, I've got no power.

Shane mumbles incoherently.

JACK (CONT'D)
Shane! Come on!

SHANE
Wha?

JACK
No power, I'm due on air, come on!

SHANE
Easy bro, gimme a minute.

JACK
No time. COME ON!

Shane barely stands, rubbing his face.

JACK (CONT'D)
Shane. Now.

SHANE
I'm coming, ok.

Jack goes back to the door.

JACK
I'm going to fuck with your
generators, ok?

He SLAMS the door.

SHANE
Wha...whatever.

INT. GENERATOR ROOM - DAY

Three generators are lined up, the middle one is silent and Jack paces up and down like an expectant father.

JACK
Think Jack, think. It's dead, what
did we do before? Fuses?

He checks the fuse panel on the wall, it's fine.

JACK (CONT'D)
Ok, fine. Cables, cables, cables.

He picks over the connections, it looks good. Come on Jack.

Shane has appeared behind him, sitting on a crate.

SHANE
Take a moment Jack, what are our
steps?

Jack looks at him.

JACK
Fuse. Connections. Fuel. Primer.

SHANE
And, where do we start?

JACK
Fuel.

He jumps to action and gets down to the fuel line.

JACK (CONT'D)
A small kink, but shouldn't have
stopped it.

SHANE
Depends on the flow, has anyone
checked the tanks recently?

JACK
Is anyone here the engineer?

SHANE
True.

JACK
Ok, primer.

He pumps the primer and hits ignite.

Nothing.

SHANE
Do it again.

Jack does as told.

The machine coughs into life.

JACK
Come to papa!

SHANE
What a team bro.

Jack looks at him. He rests his hand on dust covered box hanging on the wall.

He wipes the dust to reveal TRANSMITTER ARRAY, it hasn't been opened in a long time.

JACK
Yeah, thanks for all your help.

SHANE
Aww, I didn't do that much.

JACK
That's what I meant asshole.

Shane points at the clock on the wall.

SHANE
Gonna check the studio?

Jack curses as he runs for the stairs.

INT. STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Jacks throws himself into his chair and fakes a prayer when he sees the desk is lit up.

He settles his ears and flicks the microphone on.

Adam stands at the window looking out, he lifts his left hand

and counts Jack in.

Three fingers.

Two.

One.

Jacks takes the cue.

JACK

Gooooood Mooooorrrrrning Wasteland.

He grabs a tape and slots it.

JACK (CONT'D)

Sorry boys and girls we had a few technical glitches this morning, but it's all worked out now. A few radioactive gremlins got into my generator, but we got 'em. When we come back let's talk about giant scorpions, man eating cockroaches and what to do with them. For now, let's get our morning off to a bright start in a place where the sun always shines on tv.

Slide, mix, coffee, sits back at stares at the dirty ceiling.

The song fades out, Adam has gone.

JACK (CONT'D)

You know, I considered myself worldly, before the war and remember I call it a war very lightly, I would have said I was well travelled. Now, twenty years later I realise I haven't stepped more than fifty feet outside the walls of our bunker. How sad is that? Which also makes me wonder how life really is out there in the world. Assuming people are still making people there must be whole new generations of listeners asking awkward questions about their own lives, listening to these funky tunes.

He stops and takes a moment.

JACK (CONT'D)

And I don't know a thing about it. The world, the people, here I am in my cocoon playing songs about TV when TV died the day the bombs

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
 dropped. What good is there in a billion TV sets without a signal? All those satellites spinning around us, falling apart waiting for a shopping channel. At least in the sixties we could have smashed them up for firewood and frosted windows. You can't keep warm burning a flat screen can you?

He pops one tape and punches another.

JACK (CONT'D)
 On the back of that inspired piece of philosophy and the obsession we had back then with the magic box, I am running into some truly dire straits. Take it away boys.

Jack spins out of his chair and grabs his empty mug.

INT. STUDIO - LATER

Jack thumps back into his seat with a refilled coffee mug. A song drifts out and he leans in.

JACK
 Did ya miss me? Didja?
 Didja?...Hell, I wouldn't miss me,
 I'm just not riding the lightning
 today guys. Now where were we?

He takes a sip of coffee.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Yes. The beasts of the wasteland, not being an expert I don't know what's out there, what dangers are lurking in the remains of civilisation. Why not call in and give me an idea, sell me your stories of giant scorpions or radioactive cockroaches? The phone's been sat here since we closed the accumulator, the number is still the same. Go for it, call me, I'm listening. In the meantime we are taking a trip to a beautiful place in the eighties, the magical Vienna. Let's go boys.

He pushes the sliders and picks up his tennis ball.

Even when watched, the dusty red phone never rings.

JACK (CONT'D)

You people, you useless boring people. What is it? Does nobody have a phone anymore? Before the bombs dropped we had more phones than people, I get that networks fail, I get that the internet died pretty quickly, I get all that, but people of the wasteland, there must be exchanges with hard wired lines that survived. Our ability to communicate set us apart from the animals, where are you, if you can't find an old fashioned phone with a dial tone then the human race has no hope.

He throws the ball hard against the wall and it spangs across the studio.

JACK (CONT'D)

Let's say that again just to be clear. NO HOPE. Here's a song.

More coffee, he looks again at the red phone, he reaches out to touch it, but doesn't.

JACK (CONT'D)

Ok, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have gone off at y'all like that, but I do have an excuse. You see, since Adam my co-host went off on a journey to find a safe haven I have been alone. There's the crew of course, we talk, but after all this time we just don't connect anymore.

He leans in and whispers.

JACK (CONT'D)

Sometimes I think they want me gone.

Leans back.

JACK (CONT'D)

I'll back up a little, you see Adam and I came to the station with big ideas and we nailed the show in the early days, really nailed it. Until that was, Evie came to town. She was the only outsider we ever embraced and it didn't take long for her to ruin everything.

He pulls his bottle of scotch from beneath the desk and fills a tumbler.

JACK (CONT'D)

As soon as she got cleaned up she was making eyes at all the boys, Shane was easy, of course. Adam took a shine to her, but she got stuck into Eric the Viking. That didn't end well, so Adam stepped in. Wow, just like a shanky soap opera. She avoided me, but I was suspicious from day one.

He takes a hit of the scotch.

JACK (CONT'D)

It didn't take long for her to start working on Adam, building up ideas of a safe haven out I the wasteland. Somewhere they could go to and try to live normally...Then one night, after alienating everybody else she convinced him to take her away, in our only vehicle and like that they were gone.

Jack looks up to see Maggie standing at the glass wall.

JACK (CONT'D)

I still miss him, the fun we had on the show, waiting for the red phone to ring so we could give people free stuff. I often wonder if I should have gone with them? Find a new audience, start over, seek out this promised land.

He waves to Maggie, she gently shakes her head.

JACK (CONT'D)

But my adventuring days are long behind me, my clock is ticking and above all, I'm just scared. Scared of what might be out there, scared that you might actually be listening and you don't ring in, because we really are that bad these days.

He watches Maggie walk away.

JACK (CONT'D)

After all this...Melancholy how about something light? Here are five fab songs from the fabbest fab five themselves, please enjoy and think of simpler times.

He fades out, empties his tumbler and closes his eyes.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jack, Eric, and Maggie sit around the kitchen table.

Shane leans against the counter.

SHANE

What do I miss? From before?

He scratches his head

SHANE (CONT'D)

A weekend in the Bay of Islands with my brothers, we'd go diving for Crayfish, then spend the evening drinking beer on the beach cooking them up. Beautiful.

ERIC

I've been there. It is beautiful.

SHANE

It's even better with the Whanu bro.

JACK

Most things are.

SHANE

Yeah. Fresh Cray dripping in garlic butter, beers and good company. That's what I miss.

JACK

Eric? How about you?

ERIC

The two things that won me over when I came to America were the coffee shops and the movies.

MAGGIE

Not corny at all.

ERIC

Maybe. I had never seen such a list of coffee drinks, in my youth I rarely drank it, but in Seattle it was all caffeine culture.

JACK

And?

ERIC

I know, you can go to the movies everywhere, but seeing big pictures here, before everybody else. I like
(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)
that.

MAGGIE
JJ? You?

Jack shakes his head.

JACK
I don't know. Good food, wine, and
I mean really good. The fast car,
days at the beach, yes, all of
those things, but I think I miss
having good company the most.

The others say nothing, Jack looks up.

MAGGIE
Charmed, I'm sure.

JACK
I mean, warmth, personal touch,
having people around you that
really know you. The things you
share, that scent of clean hair in
an embrace that could go on
forever...Not being alone.

A moment passes.

ERIC
Jack, we understand.

JACK
Wow. You're still that easy Eric.
You don't know me at all do you?

ERIC
Asshole.

JACK
I'm a simple man, dog and a beer,
leave it at that. Maybe a ball
game.

MAGGIE
Well, that's a hard act to follow.

She exhales for a moment. Shane stifles a snicker.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
The hardest thing for me is the
lack of joy, I used to feast on
life in the big cities. New York in
all its seasons had energy and it
ran me. I never got lost in the
mass, I just enjoyed swimming
alongside the sharks, picking my
(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 adventures and living my dream.

She stops a moment to swallow a welling regret.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 Here, in this bunker we've had good times and bad, but I need more. I thrive on the spark of strangers and being trapped here doing our job has too often left me lost. We were lucky to survive as long as we have, I appreciate that as much as you all, but to what purpose?

She wipes away free flowing tears.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 There's been plenty of long dark nights where the thought of ending it all has been the most obvious thing to me.

The air in the kitchen turns thick.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 I'm...I'm sorry...I said too much.

JACK
 Its okay.

She explodes.

MAGGIE
 Do ya think? Really?

JACK
 Wait, let's--

MAGGIE
 Nothing's okay Jack, look around you for fuck's sake.

Maggie stands.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 I'm due on air.

She is at the door already.

JACK
 Maggie, wait.

He looks at Eric.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Do SOMETHING! Eric, she can't work like this.

ERIC
Said she'd be okay Jack, just take
a minute. She'll be fine.

JACK
But--

The moment is SHATTERED by repeated BOOMING outside.

JACK (CONT'D)
--What the?

INT. MAIN ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Jack pulls on a heavy coat and peering through the slitted
window on the station's heavy front door. Shane watches him.

We hear the wind, HOWLING COLD broken by the BOOMING noise.

JACK
Can't see anything, looks deadly
though.

He looks at Shane as he zips his heavy coat up to the chin.

JACK (CONT'D)
You not comin'?

SHANE
Joking Bro. Its cold as a penguins
chuff out there.

JACK
Wha--

SHANE
Bum. Ass. Sitting on the ice, cold,
geddit?

Jack just shakes his head.

SHANE (CONT'D)
The sodium lights won't be on, and
they'll take a few minutes to warm
up, better off with a torch.

JACK
Great.

BOOM.

BOOM.

JACK (CONT'D)
What the hell is it? Do you think
someone is breaking in?

SHANE
Do you?

JACK
Why?

SHANE
If you did, you wouldn't be going
out there would you?

Jack takes a second.

BOOM.

JACK
I could be letting in a tribe of
bloodthirsty wasteland raiders, to
kill us in our beds.

SHANE
Not a lot of point in that is
there?

JACK
Not really, not anymore.

Eric arrives.

JACK (CONT'D)
Besides, sounds metallic to me. I
think we have something loose. As
long as its not the array.

BOOM.

ERIC
Can't find them.

SHANE
What?

ERIC
Jack says I have his goggles.

JACK
You were the last person that had
them.

SHANE
Eric, you been stealing things
again?

ERIC
I looked, I can't see them.

JACK
I would bet real money they are in
your room.

ERIC
Be my guest.

SHANE
Wait, the storage box outside.
That'll have a pair.

JACK
For sure?

SHANE
For sure.

Jack peers outside again.

JACK
Okay ladies. I'm stepping out for a
while. I may be some time.

He cracks the door and the wind almost rips them from their
feet.

EXT. STATION COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Jack fights through the wind to the storage locker and cracks
it open, he gathers the goggles and pulls over his hood. He
can breath again.

BOOM! BOOM!

He scans around for the noise, picks the general area and
moves forward.

Adam is beside him now, in his customary denim, no safety
clothes.

ADAM
Alone at last Jack.

BOOM!

As Jack gets closer to the front gate he sees the source of
the noise.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Why is that, do you think? Why is
it you out here and them in there?

BOOM!

A steel panel has come loose and is flexing in the ferocious
winds.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Told you, didn't I?

He pulls the panel back in place, but it slips again, the noise is muffled though.

JACK
Can't talk to you Adam, you left me here a long time ago. You're in my mind.

Boom!

He fights his way back to the door.

JACK (CONT'D)
You're not here, not anymore.

ADAM
Are you? Is anybody? Hey, look up there.

Adam points up to the second floor, the studio is lit up, so is Bob's office. In the window Bob and Viola are silhouetted.

Boom!

Jack makes a half wave, the two figures do not respond.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Wonder what's so important Jack?

Jack grabs for the door.

Adam is gone on the wind.

INT. MAIN ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Shane and Eric haven't moved.

Boom!

JACK
Man that was cold.

He rubs his freezing hands together furiously.

SHANE
Cold as a penguin's chuff?

JACK
Yes Shane.

ERIC
Hah. Like that, funny.

JACK
I just don't understand what level
your brain works on sometimes.

Boom!

ERIC
Lowest common denominator. So,
what's going on outside?

JACK
Loose panel on the main gate, I
can't fix it now, but tomorrow
we'll go take a look.

SHANE
Yessir.

Jack shrugs out of his heavy coat.

JACK
What's Viola doing with Bob, Eric?

ERIC
Minding her own business, like you
should be.

JACK
Touchy.

ERIC
Yeah, well.

Boom!

SHANE
I've had enough, see youse later.

JACK
So?

ERIC
So what?

JACK
So, what's she up to, or does the
puppet master not tell the puppet?

ERIC
I don't know Jack...Jack.

JACK
Funny.

ERIC
You need to chill out, get some
sleep.

JACK
Whatever Eric.

Viola joins them and hangs off Eric's shoulder.

VIOLA
What did I miss?

ERIC
Jack's latest conspiracy.

VIOLA
I'm intrigued JJ, share some love.

Boom!

JACK
The main gate needs fixing, sorry
if the noise keeps you up tonight.

VIOLA
You angry?

JACK
Yep.

VIOLA
With me?

JACK
Yep.

Eric unfolds.

ERIC
Jack I told you to calm down.

JACK
Why were you with Bob V? What's
going on?

ERIC
Jack I'm telling you to back off.

Boom! Slowing down with the wind.

VIOLA
It's okay Eric.

ERIC
But--

VIOLA
He'll find out soon enough.

JACK
Find out what? For fuck's sake!

VIOLA
I talk to Bob Jack, often, so it's nothing unusual, but today he wanted my opinion.

JACK
On?

VIOLA
On you, the show, programming.

JACK
But you're, you're a fucking cook, you're a cleaner, you're not a radio professional!

ERIC
I've had enough of this.

Viola puts a hand on Eric's shoulder.

Boom!

VIOLA
You're right Jack about all of those things, but the one you missed was the most important.

She comes between the men.

VIOLA (CONT'D)
I am a listener, an audience, and after twenty years listening to you I think we need to make some changes.

JACK
So, you're running the station now. Wow.

VIOLA
No jack, it's Bob's station, always was, always will be. He just values my input.

ERIC
Nothing personal Jack, besides, you are suffering.

JACK
I'm not suffering, not yet, I might be sick, but I'm not going down without a fight.

ERIC
Nobody said anything about
fighting.

JACK
Give it a chance. Fucking people.

Boom!

VIOLA
We'll work it out together, one way
or another.

JACK
I'm not having any part of it.

VIOLA
There'll be a meeting, tomorrow.

JACK
A meeting? How exciting.

ERIC
Yes.

JACK
You knew?

ERIC
We all care about Aftermath Jack.

JACK
Bullshit. It's all about you taking
my slot.

ERIC
Not that simple. Wait for the
meeting.

JACK
No, it won't be a meeting. From
where I'm standing it'll be a
reckoning.

Boom!

INT. STUDIO - LATER

Maggie is sitting back as a barrage of Softrock leaks from her earphones. Jack stands in the glass corridor, he raises his scotch to her.

She waves him in.

MAGGIE
Hope you brought the bottle.

JACK
You're not a scotch girl.

MAGGIE
More for your own protection, Shane
has mentioned this sacred bottle a
couple of times.

JACK
My dirty little secret.

He waves the half empty bottle, the amber liquid sloshes
around.

JACK (CONT'D)
Shane's jealous. Do him some good.

MAGGIE
He just likes a drink, you know
that.

JACK
Well, just for once I like having
my hands on something he wants.

MAGGIE
Oh Jack, we've been down that
street honey.

Jack takes a slug from the bottle.

JACK
What you said earlier.

MAGGIE
Yes.

JACK
I know you were serious, but
wouldn't you rather just leave? Try
somewhere new?

MAGGIE
Always seemed too hard.

She points to her empty wine glass on the console.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I'm back on in a few seconds, be a
darling, fetch me a fresh bottle
from my room.

JACK
Guess. Got nuthin better to do.

INT. MAGGIE'S QUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Jack stands in Maggie's sanctum, a ladies room quite obviously, slight touches of decor, a double bed replacing the bunks, Marilyn Monroe beams down above it.

Jack is a fish out of water, there is no beginning to the organised chaos and certainly no end, as we scan the skyline of trinkets we notice layers of dust.

He is on the verge of panic, before he sticks his head through the door.

JACK
Shane!

A brief second passes.

JACK (CONT'D)
C'mere, I need you. Quick.

Shane pushes past him into the room.

SHANE
Maggie know you're here?

JACK
Yeah, she asked me to fetch a bottle of wine, only, well, look at it.

SHANE
Looks same as it always has to me. Only more dusty.

JACK
Where do I start? Do you know where she keeps the stuff?

SHANE
All over the place bro like a real wino. Tried under the bed?

JACK
Not yet. Not comfortable messing with her stuff.

SHANE
Hey, she sent you and you came running. If anything she'll appreciate some of the dust being moved about, eh.

JACK
Probably right, but, you know what happens if you keep her waiting.

SHANE
Then get on your knees and take a look, you'll be the first man under that bed.

Jack flicks a withering look and wriggles down to the side of the bed.

JACK
Shit. Its dark, you got a torch or something?

There is noise as he sweep detritus away.

SHANE
In the workshop. Not here.

Shane drops to his haunches.

SHANE (CONT'D)
Anything?

JACK
Nah.

More noise.

JACK (CONT'D)
Wait. Feels like a crate, about the right size. If I can stretch...

Jack slides back from the bed, the grating noise at the end of his arm belies the wine box he is dragging.

JACK (CONT'D)
Well that looks right, feels light though.

SHANE
Yep that's her label.

The box is filthy from years beneath the bed.

SHANE (CONT'D)
Classy.

Jack gives it a slight shake before peering inside.

JACK
Empty. Just some old crap. Papers and shit.

SHANE

Shane, that was probably her last box. In here at least.

Jack is leafing through the contents.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Better go and face the music, and the lady.

JACK

Wait. This stuff.

His leafing speeds up, holding the odd memento up for scrutiny.

JACK (CONT'D)

It's Adam.

SHANE

What do you mean?

JACK

Adam's stuff, his I.D., his watch, and this, this looks like a map.

SHANE

A map?

JACK

The route he was taking with Evie, to her fucking safe haven. Looks like they were heading towards Vegas.

SHANE

Show me.

JACK

Shane. We could use this, we could follow him, find Adam, get out of here for good.

SHANE

Now you are talking crazy JJ. We have a job to do, we--

JACK

I need to talk to Maggie.

Jack bundles up Adam's belongings and hustles.

SHANE

(to an empty room)
Jack, wait, calm down.

INT. STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie is playing an air guitar in her seat when Jack barges in.

JACK

What the HELL is this stuff? Hey?

Maggie stops mid-riff, steels her gaze and points to the 'On Air' sign.

Jack drops heavily into a free chair.

She slides herself back on the mic and purrs out her best smokey voice.

MAGGIE

Hey Nightcrawlers. That was a dose of meaningless Glam Rock that has its place in our world today.

Jack's attention drifts to her wine glass, it is full.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I have a visitor in my studio tonight, let me see what he wants and I might get him on air with me, but first lets see how we go with another long haired denim lover. Let's try living on a prayer.

Jack holds up the collection.

JACK

What's the meaning of this Maggie?

MAGGIE

It belongs to Adam, obviously.

JACK

Why do you have it? Why has it been hidden under your bed all this time?

MAGGIE

There was never a right time to tell you Jack. Adam left in a hurry.

She holds up pinched fingers.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I told you I was this close to going with them. At the last minute he gave me his stuff, he didn't want his identity lost out there, if something happened.

Jack stares at her, then the map, then her, then the glass.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Turns out I had some wine left
after all.

JACK

You knew I'd find this, you knew
there was nothing in your room, you
sent me for this.

MAGGIE

Maybe I did.

JACK

All these years, why lie, to me?

MAGGIE

There was never a lie Jack, there
was just never any reason to spill
the beans.

He holds up the map.

JACK

You knew where they were going, you
knew.

MAGGIE

Does it matter now, really? Does
it?

She sips her wine, barely.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Jack, you are dying. If not now,
you will be soon. What the fuck are
you going to do? Lets consider for
a moment that Evie, as much of a
bitch as she was. Maybe she
actually had it right. Maybe they
are sitting pretty in some safe
haven in Vegas where people do
listen to the radio and have
medical help.

JACK

Don't make this about saving me.

MAGGIE

JJ, you are a dear friend, I can't
sit and watch you wither away.
Consider this a gift, from Adam and
from me. I want to see you try to
help yourself. God knows the rest
of us are long past getting away
from here, but you, you have drive,
(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
you have a reason to have a go.

Jack looks away.

JACK
Apparently Bob wants a meeting
tomorrow, after the show.

MAGGIE
I heard.

Jack looks back at her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Well, he kind of told me.

JACK
So, I'm a liability, is that it?
Too old for the show, a health
risk, too bitter and twisted.

MAGGIE
I don't know or care about the
politics Jack. I do know that the
shit in your hand gives you an
option.

She comes closer.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
A chance to go on fighting, to have
a goal, instead of a mind numbing
routine that will rot alongside
you.

JACK
It's too much to take in, I'd have
to plan, pack.

MAGGIE
We're dead, inside and outside. The
rest of us are all beaten out one
way or another. You, Jack Jones,
you have a shot. Be the JJ I knew
twenty years ago, break free and
see what's beyond this fucking
compound.

Jack looks at his scotch like an old friend and drags a long
slug.

JACK
Maybe.

MAGGIE
Whatever you think they want to
take away from you, just remember
(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
this. We all know deep down,
there's nobody listening.

JACK
I believe they're still there, the
audience, I really do.

MAGGIE
Really? Deep down, in the dark
places you know that phone will
never ring again. Half the time I
just listen to the music, I don't
speak out, because I know there's
nobody there.

JACK
I've seen you working Maggie.

MAGGIE
Seriously, do you think I'd be
fucking Shane on the desk, on air,
if I thought we had an audience?

JACK
Well, we don't call you Duchess for
nuthin.

MAGGIE
Jack, what we do stopped being
worth something a lifetime ago.
Sleep on it if you have to, but
believe me, the best thing you
could do is take that map and find
the chance of a new life before
this one eats you alive. Literally.

JACK
You finished?

MAGGIE
Oh yes.

JACK
Your song ended two minutes ago.

MAGGIE
I know. Like I said, I know there's
nobody out there listening.

JACK
I'm tired, need some sleep, You
better get back to work.

He grabs his bottle and slips through the door.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Jack stumbles into the room, Eric and Viola sit close together at the table.

JACK
Don't mind me lovebirds.

ERIC
Still pissy Jack?

JACK
I'm--

He pauses to drink.

JACK (CONT'D)
I'm just really disappointed, and sad. It hurts that you guys can't treat me like a real person.

ERIC
We've tried to talk to you.

JACK
When? Huh?

ERIC
Be honest, you're not the most approachable of people, especially now. With your problem.

JACK
You know, I thought better of you. I really did.

VIOLA
Had enough of this, I'm turning in.

Viola waddles away.

ERIC
I'll be along shortly.

Silence falls between the men.

JACK
What's in it for you?

ERIC
You haven't even heard the reasoning.

JACK
I don't need to.

ERIC

Jack bear with us, if anything we can show what happens when a team pulls together.

JACK

Dear God, listen to you. Don't worry I'll be out of your hair tomorrow. I've had some news, some information has come into my possession and I've been thinking on it.

ERIC

Yeah, sounds great. Look, I'll ask you again in the morning, when the scotch has lifted.

Eric stands.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Night.

JACK

Whatever.

Jack pulls the sleeping pills from a pocket and stares at them for a few moments, he knocks them back along with a good slug of scotch.

INT. OUTSIDE ERIC'S DOOR - LATER

The corridor is dark, in the gloom we see Jack drain his drink and drop the glass.

He looks at the door in front of him, then RAPS out a LOUD knock, knock, knock, KNOCK.

Shuffling behind the door, Jack pushes it open and an unkempt Viola is behind it.

JACK

Sorry, were you sleeping?

VIOLA

Jack? What do you want?

JACK

Goggles.

VIOLA

What?

JACK

My goggles. Eric borrowed them fucking ages ago.

VIOLA
And you want them back, right now,
at two in the morning?

JACK
Yep.

VIOLA
Go to bed.

JACK
No. I want my goggles.

VIOLA
I don't even know what you are
talking about.

JACK
Eric will. Where is he?

VIOLA
He's asleep, what do you think?

JACK
ERIC!

VIOLA
Shusshhh!

JACK
Don't shush me.

VIOLA
You're acting the fool JJ. Go to
bed, sleep it off.

JACK
ERIC!

ERIC
Do you know what time it is?

VIOLA
Two.

JACK
Apparently, two, in the morning.

ERIC
Well?

JACK
I want my goggles.

ERIC
Seriously?

JACK

Now.

ERIC

What, you leaving in the night?
Can't wait to run away?

VIOLA

Been drinking, let him be.

ERIC

Jack, I'll say this once and once
only.

JACK

Hit me.

ERIC

Go to bed, I swear you will get
your goggles tomorrow.

JACK

Swear?

ERIC

Yes, how many times?

JACK

Ok.

Jack deflates at the shoulders.

JACK (CONT'D)

Just one question Eric...do you
ever take that disgusting orange
vest off?

Eric looks like he will say something.

VIOLA

That's enough, night Jack.

As she shuts the door a pair of goggles can be seen hanging
from a shelf behind Viola.

Jack doesn't see them.

INT. JACK'S QUARTERS - MORNING

Jack opens groggy eyes, he lies half out of the bunk.

Adam stands over him.

ADAM

Morning princess.

Jack slides up wincing.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Big day today partner, you still
gonna come lookin for me? Get away
from Assholes Inc?

Jack reaches for a drink, anything liquid.

JACK
Just back off, I got this.

Adam beams.

ADAM
That's good, we're engaging now.

INT. TOILET CUBICLE - THE NEXT DAY

Jack reads on the toilet, he is looking worse for wear. As he finishes a page, he rips it from the book and adds it to a pile of others next to him.

He jumps out of his skin at a knocking on the door.

BOB (O.S.)
Jack, you in there?

BOB, 62 years old, has the nasal voice of a man half his size, his constantly bare feet are as musty as his rumoured faded Hawaiian shirt.

JACK
Bob?

BOB (O.S.)
Need to see you Jack.

Jack looks down at a pair of dirty bare feet poking under the door.

JACK
Bob, I'm taking a shit.

BOB (O.S.)
Team meeting today, we need to
talk.

JACK
I've been chasing my tail trying to
talk to you and you expect to get
my attention here, right now.

BOB (O.S.)
It's not all about you Jack, it's
the station, the show, things we
(MORE)

BOB (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 need to say. Jack, I wouldn't be
 here--

JACK
 Leave me alone.

BOB (O.S.)
 But--

JACK
 Fuck off. Right now.

BOB (O.S.)
 Message received.

Shuffling sounds as Bob's feet vanish from beneath the door.

JACK
 Wowser.

BOB (O.S.)
 Sorry Maggie, excuse me.

MAGGIE (O.S.)
 Don't mind me.

BOB (O.S.)
 Good show last night?

MAGGIE (O.S.)
 Thanks.

BOB (O.S.)
 It was a question.

MAGGIE (O.S.)
 Oh.

JACK
 Goodbye Bob.

A door snicks shut, we strain to hear Maggie's bath water
 lapping.

Jack returns to his book.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Jack looks sheepishly into the mirror, his toilet is still
 running through it's flush cycle.

JACK
 Sorry Maggie.

MAGGIE
 Sorry for you. That fat prick is so
 out of touch.

Jack lathers up for a shave.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 Did you sleep ok?

JACK
 Well enough.

He scrapes away a cheek full of whiskers.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Made my mind up. I'm done with this
 place.

MAGGIE
 You sure?

JACK
 More so after that.

MAGGIE
 What's the plan?

JACK
 Vegas. Find Adam, a real doctor if
 I'm lucky, if not see what happens.

MAGGIE
 I'll miss you JJ.

JACK
 Come with me.

MAGGIE
 You know I can't.

She sips at her wine.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 One last show?

JACK
 You know it baby.

He shaves the other cheek.

JACK (CONT'D)
 I'll show them.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Jack scrapes clean his plate of powdered eggs, Shane watches

him and viola busies herself in the back of the room.

SHANE
What's up with you chief?

JACK
Nuthin.

SHANE
I've never seen you eat a full
plate of eggs without complaining.

JACK
Well they're good for me,
nutritious and delicious.

SHANE
Bullshit.

Jack takes a big gulp of coffee.

SHANE (CONT'D)
What happened with Maggie, what did
she tell you?

JACK
She told me enough Shane, she gave
me an option.

SHANE
Thought she'd take that shit to her
grave.

JACK
Just a few trinkets, hardly a
scandal.

More coffee and a backhand wipe of his lips.

JACK (CONT'D)
You knew?

SHANE
It was for your own protection
Jack.

JACK
You all knew?

Shane does not answer verbally.

JACK (CONT'D)
Well, aren't I the putz?

Jack watches Viola for a couple of seconds, she has stopped
bustling and is looking at him.

JACK (CONT'D)
I've got a show to do.

INT. STUDIO - LATER

Jack stares at the red phone, scratchy evidence of music escapes from his headset.

It fades as he hits the sliders.

JACK
Hope you didn't all drift away like
I just did Wastelanders.

he takes a breath.

JACK (CONT'D)
Today dear fans is my last day at
Aftermath105. I have decided it is
a fine time to move on, pass the
torch, share the force, basically
I'm about to go on a terribly big
adventure.

A swig of coffee.

JACK (CONT'D)
There is a movement here amongst
the crew to usurp me from this slot
and I cannot simply stand by when
that happens. I have a plan and I
intend to play it out. As for you,
dear Wastelanders, well I'd like to
say I'm a firm believer in our
audience, I respect my listeners.

Jack absently reaches out to touch the red phone.

JACK (CONT'D)
Part of that respect tells me not
to make it easy for them, so I
won't. In fact I am going to make
it damn near impossible for them to
ruin what we have.

He strokes dust from the back of the receiver.

JACK (CONT'D)
Now, I'm going to play you a song
and as it plays out I'm going to
watch the studio phone. If
somebody, anybody rings me, I will
stay to put up a fight.

He rubs his eyes.

JACK (CONT'D)

On the other hand, if it doesn't ring, then we'll be parting ways. Sorry about that, but hey, comes to us all. No better time to take it out with the obvious 'with or without you'.

He brings the song in.

He then slips off his cans and rolls his chair closer to the red phone, he sits his chin on the desk and takes a point blank viewpoint.

Nothing.

Back on air.

JACK (CONT'D)

Well that was fun people.

He looks at the phone again.

JACK (CONT'D)

I don't even know if the line is still active, been years since we heard the dial tone. How about a live test on air?

He gingerly picks up the phone, drags clear one of his ears and puts the receiver to it.

He recoils as if bitten.

JACK (CONT'D)

Fuck is that?

A tinny computerised voice comes from the telephone.

TELEPHONE VOICE

--for calling the National Archives. Please wait for menu options.

Jack listens closer now.

JACK

Man, I hated these things.

TELEPHONE VOICE

Option one. Press two to leave a contact message...End of options, please press three to hear the menu again or end the call.

Jack reaches across and hits two, there is a beep.

JACK
Hello, hello, my name is Jack Jones
and I'm--

TELEPHONE VOICE
After the tone, please leave your
name and contact location. Then
hang up.

BEEP!

JACK
My name is Jack Jones, I am in
Arizona, a station, Aftermath105, a
radio station. Who am I talking to?
Are there people or am I talkin to
a dead machine in a basement? Where
are yo--

The line BEEPS once more, then Brrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr.

JACK (CONT'D)
Mary mother of bullshit.

He stares at the receiver, his knuckles around it are
gripping white. He replaces the phone.

Jack turns back to his audience.

JACK (CONT'D)
Well. You will not believe what
just happened. Considering nobody
ever rings in, it appears I just
made a call out.

He reaches under the desk and brings out his scotch. He spins
the top off with one thumb.

JACK (CONT'D)
I don't know how, but I did, I
really fucking did. Here's some
music while I freak out a little.

Slider, cans off, big slug of scotch.

He stares at the phone, reaches out again and lifts it to his
ear.

Brrrrrrr, click, click, breeep.

TELEPHONE VOICE
Thankyou for calling the National
Archives. Please wa--

Jack slams the phone down and bolts from the room.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jack is breathless leaning over the table, Eric and Shane are his bemused audience.

JACK

So, I picked up the receiver again and the same thing happened.

SHANE

How?

JACK

I dunno, it did. An outgoing call, we connected with the world.

SHANE

But, how can that work? There would have to be some major government shit going down at the exchange. That's all I have to say.

JACK

Shane. I. Don't. Care.

Jack grabs a mug and slops it full of coffee.

JACK (CONT'D)

You see what this means. You get it, yes?

ERIC

It means, Jack, that you spoke to an answering machine. A machine that was probably covered in dust and just waiting for a glitch in the system.

JACK

It was no glitch. Maybe they're listening, maybe there really are survivors and they are looking for any form of communication.

SHANE

Jack, slow down bro. You'll hurt yourself.

ERIC

I can't take this at face value, especially yours.

JACK

Fuck you Eric.

ERIC
You aren't stable, what with one
thing and another.

JACK
People, boys, there are people and
they know we are here now.

SHANE
And after all this time I'm not the
only one that finds this a little
scary?

JACK
Where are the National Archives?

ERIC
Don't be stupid.

SHANE
I don't know, why?

ERIC
He's gonna go looking for it. What
do you think you're doing Jack?

JACK
How did you put it?

He sips his coffee.

JACK (CONT'D)
I'm minding my own business, just
like you should.

SHANE
Jack, there might not be such a
place, it might just be the only
system that whoever you think is
out there could get running.

ERIC
Besides, I'm pretty sure there was
nothing like that within a hundred
miles of us back in the day.

SHANE
Let's think for one minute,
somebody is out there sweeping for
open lines in the hope that a
telephone would be picked up at the
same time.

ERIC
It's a leap.

SHANE

A pretty big leap. Then I have to know how they make that shit work? First coincidence, they sweep your line. Second coincidence, you pick the phone up at the right time. Third coincidence, you stay on the line long enough to make the call.

JACK

It happened. Just as I said.

ERIC

Why now Jack? What do you gain from this charade?

Jack has fallen silent, mind whirring.

JACK

Come with me.

INT. OUTSIDE ERIC'S DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The three men half running along the corridor almost bowl Viola over.

VIOLA

What's the hurry?

ERIC

Jack says he made a phone call.

VIOLA

A what?

SHANE

A phone call, to the outside.

VIOLA

Bulllllshiiiiit.

INT. STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

All four of them cluster around the telephone like it belongs on the altar of a Mayan temple.

VIOLA

Well?

JACK

I just picked it up and it went off.

SHANE

Eric?

Eric nods at Jack and the phone.

Jack reaches out to the phone and lifts it so they can all hear.

They strain and hear nothing but the monotonous dial tone.

JACK

No, no, no, no.

ERIC

Thanks Jack.

VIOLA

Yeah, fo nuthin.

JACK

It happened, believe me, I left a goddamn message.

Eric and Viola are already at the door.

ERIC

Enough. Jack, you are a liability, this changes nothing. See you at the meeting.

He wraps his arm around Viola's shoulder.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Fancy a nap after all this excitement?

VIOLA

Yes Doctor.

They leave a space in the studio.

SHANE

Ugh, they make my skin crawl sometimes.

JACK

You and me.

SHANE

What happened here Jack?

JACK

Man, I've had it with this place, I know what happened here. I know.

SHANE

Believe you do bro, it's just their nature.

JACK

Thanks.

Jack takes position behind the desk, ready to speak to his audience.

JACK (CONT'D)

You can leave me now. I need a minute.

Shane slips away, Jack just stares at the console.

He slips on his headgear.

JACK (CONT'D)

This is me signing off Wastelanders, its been a pretty weird day so far and I think its only just begun. I've had a blast guys, but its time to wrap up. My health ain't that good and like I said the crew here think they can do better.

He tosses his ball a couple of times, then rolls it up against the red telephone.

He wipes a tear from his face.

He pulls out the jade necklace and looks at it.

JACK (CONT'D)

New beginnings.

He slips the necklace back under his shirt.

JACK (CONT'D)

Of course, I'm not making it easy for them. Sabotage is not a word suited to an artist like myself, but I am going to leave them a challenge or two. So--

He clears his throat.

JACK (CONT'D)

So once and for all, goodbye my friends.

He loads one of Eric's tapes, pulls the headset off and sits right back.

Listening to the scratchy noises coming from those small,

muffled speakers.

The tears roll freely now.

INT. JACK'S QUARTERS - LATER

Jack stuffs a holdall with clothes, sorting through his crap for odd trinkets.

Shane hangs off the doorframe.

SHANE

You don't need to go, you know that.

JACK

I can't stay Shane, not now.

He weighs up two different snowglobes, tosses one and shoves the other in his bag.

JACK (CONT'D)

Whatever happened on the phone today, I'm taking Adam's map, wherever it takes me I'm going.

SHANE

That won't be far then.

JACK

What do you mean?

SHANE

Follow your instinct Jack. Second star to the right--

JACK

--straight on 'til morning. Yeah, Peter Pan, Neverland, I get it.

SHANE

Peter Pan? I was talking about a Star Trek movie.

Jack puts his hands up.

JACK

Not the time for a Star Trek conversation.

He scans about, avoiding looking at Shane.

JACK (CONT'D)

If I'm gonna die alone, it may as well be out on the road with some purpose, rather than slumped over
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
the kitchen table in here.

SHANE
Alone, nice.

Jack looks suddenly feral.

JACK
Don't you dare take offence at
that, don't you dare. Yes, alone.

SHANE
Whatevs bro, my time here is up.

He pretends to smoke.

SHANE (CONT'D)
Smoko time.

Shane melts back into the gloomy corridor.

JACK
Hey, if you see Eric, tell him I'm
coming for my goggles.

Jack zips up his bag and swings it to his shoulder.

INT. OUTSIDE BOB'S DOOR - LATER

Jack has his hand poised to knock on the door, his eyes
closed.

JACK
Bob!

He rattles out a tune.

JACK (CONT'D)
Bob, its Jack. I need to see you.

Knocks again.

JACK (CONT'D)
Just for a minute.

Nothing. Like a grave.

JACK (CONT'D)
C'mon man.

He turns to leave, then thinks better of it and opens the
unlocked door.

INT. BOB'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The door doesn't open fully, there's a pile of scrunched up notes behind it.

The room is a mess, it looks like the last time it was cleaned was by a crazy person. The shadowy figure sat behind a big heavy desk is the mighty Bob.

JACK

Thanks for reading my notes. Fuck me. No wonder you don't know what I'm doing.

He gets down to extract some of the scribbles he has posted.

JACK (CONT'D)

You know I stopped dating these five years ago, so this one must be really old.

He balls it up and throws it away.

JACK (CONT'D)

If you really didn't want to read them you could have at least wiped your ass with them. Might have saved us a few of the classics at least.

We see Jack from Bob's POV, pacing in front of the desk now.

JACK (CONT'D)

I'm here...I'm here to quit.

He pauses for a reaction that does not come.

JACK (CONT'D)

Yes, you heard, I've had enough, me, the prodigal. No more Aftermath for me. The end. You win.

Nothing.

JACK (CONT'D)

You can keep your stinking meeting and your secret trysts with those freaks, you wanna know why?

Still nothing.

JACK (CONT'D)

Well, I'll tell you why. They don't know what they are doing, no way is this Eric's idea, he's just a puppet for Viola and believe me, deep down she's a nasty piece of

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
 work. You'll see, oh yes, you'll see.

Jack stops pacing, waits for Bob to say something.

JACK (CONT'D)
 So, here's how it rolls. You make it clear that I have left the station for health reasons and I will walk today, leaving those nutjobs to pick up the pieces. Of course I really don't expect they'll be able to do even that.

He stops to look at a map of the U.S. On the wall, then points at it.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Can I have that? Yeah? Thanks man.

He pulls the map from the wall.

Jack kneels to fold the map, he gets a glimpse of a gun hanging down from Bob's right hand.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Where was I? Yes, the crew, Maggie is an emotional timebomb and Shane doesn't know what day it is. You'll be lucky to keep things together for the next month Bob, and thanks to, well, everybody, I won't be here to fix it.

He stands back up.

JACK (CONT'D)
 What's with the gun Bob?

No response.

EXT. STATION COURTYARD - DAY

Years before.

ADAM
 What's with the gun Bob?

Adam stands by the station vehicle, Bob runs across the courtyard to get between Adam and the open gates, his weapon is down at his side.

BOB
 Can't let you do this Adam.

ADAM
We're going. Final.

BOB
You don't know what's out there
son. Neither does she.

In the car sits EVIE aged 27, young, angry and maybe pretty
under the dirt.

EVIE
I've seen more of it than you.
Adam, get in the car, now.

Eric sidles up to the car.

EVIE (CONT'D)
Stay the fuck away from me Eric.

BOB
Look, we all need to calm down, if
you want to leave let's work it
out. We need the vehicle, but maybe
we can take you out some of the
way.

EVIE
Not while that psycho is alive.

She points venomously at Eric.

Adam looks at Bob, then at Evie and finally Eric.

ADAM
No. Sorry Bob.

He slides into the vehicle, Bob moves forward, thinks twice
about raising the gun.

EVIE
Told you they would try. They're
all fucking mad.

BOB
Don't.

Adam shakes his head.

ADAM
Tell Jack, tell him I'm sorry.

He guns the engine, the vehicle fishtails past Bob heading
for the gates.

INT. ERIC'S QUARTERS - DAY

Jack slips in through the door, Eric and Viola are asleep on the lower bunk.

Jack moves slowly into the room, he sees his goggles hanging on the shelf.

EXT. THE STATION ROOF - DAY

Jack opens the outer door into bright sunshine, he carries his scotch.

He saunters over to armchair where Shane sleeps.

INT. GENERATOR ROOM - DAY

Jack stands over the studio generator, crowbar in hand.

He turns, seeking out the panel box for the transmitter array.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jack packs his washbag in silence, Maggie watches him in the mirror.

Her eyes are red and teary.

INT. BOB'S OFFICE - DAY

JACK

It comes down to this, after twenty
fucking years, really? You gonna
shoot me Bob?

Jack lifts his hands and steps back towards the door.

EXT. STATION COURTYARD - DAY

The station vehicle rushes through the gate and into the wasteland, Eric and Bob run to the threshold.

Bob shouts.

BOB

STOP!

He waves the gun pointlessly.

ERIC
Give me that.

Eric wrenches the gun from Bob and takes aim.
Shane bursts from the station running up behind them.
Eric squints at the speeding vehicle.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Couple of warning shots.

He squeezes.
Once, twice.
A third.
Shane skids to a stop.
A fourth.
The echoes of the gun fade quickly.
The car wobbles, then vanishes around the big dune.

BOB
Eric, I think you hit them.

They hear metallic screech.

SHANE
I can't find Maggie.

ERIC
Shit.

They set out towards the dune.

INT. ERIC'S QUARTERS - DAY

Jack lifts the goggles gently and looks inside the rim.
We see the letters 'JKJ' scrawled there, Jack allows himself a silent fist pump.
He moves back towards the door when, CRACK, he steps on something.
The sleeping couple stir, but don't wake.

EXT. THE STATION ROOF - DAY

Jack is next to Shane, who is asleep behind his mirrored glasses.

JACK
Thought you might like this.

He slots his scotch bottle next to Shane.

JACK (CONT'D)
It's actually cold tea, tastes like
shit, but you get used to it. Looks
good though.

INT. GENERATOR ROOM - DAY

Jack lifts his crowbar to the panel box, he levers the padlock away, smearing the thick dust for the second time ever.

As the lock shears off the panel box pops open with a gasp.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Maggie and Jack lock eyes in the mottled mirror.

MAGGIE
I'll miss you JJ.

JACK
Same goes Maggie. You'll always be
my dreamgirl.

He zips up his washbag, turns and bends down placing a gentle, lingering kiss on the top of her forehead.

INT. BOB'S OFFICE - DAY

Jack seen from Bob's POV.

JACK
Call yourself a Station Manager
Bob? You, you're fucking hopeless,
always were and now you're twice as
useless. Because you haven't even
got a brain.

The POV switches back to Jack, we see Bob in all his glory.

The rusty red mushroom stain across the window behind the skeleton, the empty skull, top blown off. The hands hanging down, bony fingers still curled around the weapon he turned on himself.

Bob is a long time dead.

Well over a couple of years, more likely seven or eight.

JACK (CONT'D)
See you around.

EXT. RAVINE EDGE - DAY

Inside the car, racing to freedom.

EVIE
Fuckin Psychos, yeah, assholes!

She reaches to Adam's arm.

A heavy thud hits the back of the car.

ADAM
What th--

The rear window explodes into the cabin, fragments of glass fill the air.

Evie's head explodes straight after, spraying matter everywhere.

Maggie sits up from the back seat covered in Evie.

Adam struggles with the wheel in panic, he is losing control.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Shit oh shit oh shit.

His neck and shoulder are ripped apart by the fourth shot.

He lurches across the wheel, the vehicle flips on a boulder and rolls towards the ravine.

Maggie can only scream.

INT. ERIC'S QUARTERS - DAY

Jack lifts his foot, beneath it are the shattered remains of a bottle, a red pill bottle.

There are a few tablets scattered around the area, we see a broken wine glass for the first time.

Jack looks to the sleeping couple, only now they aren't sleeping.

Eric's orange vest clings to the skeletal ribs of his emaciated corpse, somewhere in the nest of bony limbs is Viola, a flash of purple amongst the leathered skin.

Jack gives Eric a friendly pat lightly on the shoulder, the bones collapse a little.

Eric and Viola are a long time dead.

Not as ancient as Bob's remains, these bones are about six years old.

EXT. THE STATION ROOF - DAY

The wind is picking up on the roof.

JACK
You never listened you stupid
bastard.

Jack takes back the bottle of tea for one last slug, then slips it into Shane's blackened lap.

We see now the armchair is charred from fire, springs bursting out like broken bones. Shane fared no better, his deformed corpse, slumped in his favourite chair, his head lolling at an impossible angle.

JACK (CONT'D)
They'd better not let you smoke in
bed now, wherever you ended up, you
big lump.

Jack walks back to the external door.

JACK (CONT'D)
Enjoy the scotch.

Shane died accidentally in his own fire more than five years ago.

INT. GENERATOR ROOM - DAY

Jack lets the panel box swing open, he dusts off the panel and seeks out the main kill switch.

It is very clear that the Transmitter Array is already set to OFF.

Jack stares at the switch and its indicator.

All that airtime and nothing got outside of the studio.

Twenty years of hard work pour silently from his eyes.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jack pulls away from the kiss.

We see the real Maggie weathered by time, stewing in thick, black water, her body is ruined, her face a skull fixed in a

silent scream.

Her left arm drapes over the side of the bath, Jack's eyes follow it down to the gaping wound at her wrist and the rust colour stain on the floor below.

He picks up her fallen wine glass and stands it up.

He touches her sunken cheek with the back of his hand.

JACK
Sweet dreams Duchess.

Maggie gave up after Shane's accident.

EXT. RAVINE EDGE - DAY

The crash is recent, the wreck teeters on the edge, blood covered Maggie sits nearby swigging from a wine bottle.

Shane arrives first, he slides in next to her.

MAGGIE
What fucker did that?

SHANE
Mags, you okay, you hurt?

He is checking her over, she struggles out of his hands.

SHANE (CONT'D)
Sit still baby, you're in shock.

MAGGIE
Evie, she fuckin exploded, then
Adam. Oh dear God.

Eric and Bob arrive, one aghast, one enjoying the carnage.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Eric, you stupid cunt.

She looks to Bob.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
And you let him.

Bob is broken, he drops down crawls over to the wreck.

BOB
What are we going to do?

MAGGIE
Well I know what we can't do, we
can't tell Jack. Ever.

She drinks heavily from the bottle, Shane heads over to the vehicle.

SHANE

Eric, come here you sick bastard.

INT. MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Jack pulls on his big outdoor coat, shrugging into it.

JACK (V.O.)

So once and for all, goodbye my friends.

He straps his goggles to his head and swings his bag over one shoulder.

He takes one more look at Adam's map.

JACK (CONT'D)

And that was that.

The station is silent.

Jack hefts open the heavy door and steps out.

EXT. STATION COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The sun is bright, but Jack still pulls his coat tight against the cold.

He takes one more lingering look at the outside of the station, the defunct transmitter, the studio windows next to Bob's brain spattered art.

He pushes back against the big gates and slips through the gap.

EXT. THE WASTELAND - LATER

Jack slogs up the giant dune outside the station, physically fighting his body step by step.

As he crests the dune the landscape is revealed.

The straight lines of blacktop sporadically broken by sand drifts and fissures, occasional shells of destroyed buildings clinging to their foundations like ancient skeletons.

JACK

Obviously not Kansas anymore.

He takes a drink of water.

He looks upon the empty world, his eyes focus on a ravine between him and the ruined buildings.

Where the road drops sharply into the ravine, the back end of a vehicle can be seen protruding.

JACK (CONT'D)

What the?

He descends the dune, loping steps at first, breaking into a stumbling run.

EXT. RAVINE EDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jack gets within a few feet of the vehicle.

He drops to his knees and wails like a baby.

The vehicle may be upside down and charred, but the logo of AFTERMATH105 can still clearly be seen on the protruding back end.

JACK

Adam. No, no, no.

Jack sits back on his knees, tears stream into the dust.

He sobs for a minute, picks himself up and approaches the wreck.

On the other side of the car there are two graves.

One grave is marked, even the weathered wooden cross still clearly states ADAM.

Hanging from it is Adam's greenstone pendant, another gift from Shane.

The other grave is bare.

Between the graves are a few empty beer bottles and one of Maggie's classic reds, buried, broken and faded by the passing of time.

JACK (CONT'D)

They knew, all of them they fucking
knew all this time and never told
me.

He kicks violently at the unmarked grave.

JACK (CONT'D)

All your fault you FUCKING BITCH!

He keeps kicking at the grave until he is in a cloud of dust and collapses to his knees again.

He rolls onto his back between the graves and closes his dirt streamed eyes.

Jack screams long and loud.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

The studio is empty, lifeless, silent.

No lights, just a sliver of moonlight across the tennis ball and the telephone.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

In the halflight Maggie's decayed corpse still wallows in fetid water.

The noiseless bathroom is claustrophobic.

EXT. THE STATION ROOF - NIGHT

Shane's body takes on a ghostly hue under the bright stars, the bottle glistens in his lap.

The unnatural silence is heavy.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

Close up on the desk, headphones hanging, chair empty, tennis ball against the telephone.

No sound in a studio, it's wrong.

INT. BOB'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Bob and his sharp edged cranium are a dark silhouette against the rusty window, the quiet is thick in the air.

INT. ERIC'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

In the gloom the orange of Eric's vest still glows ethereally in the silence.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

We close up and focus on the telephone.

Way beyond the stillness a faint brrrrrrr may or may not be heard, we move closer sti--

The telephone RINGS!

And RINGS!

And RINGS!

And RINGS!

And RINGS!

And RINGS!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jack is slumped at the table, his dirty face down on the surface an upended coffee cup lies nearby.

For all intent he looks dead.

JACK (V.O.)
If I'm gonna die alone, it may as well be out on the road with some purpose, rather than slumped over the kitchen table in here.

Distantly we hear the telephone ringing and RINGing and RINGING!

His eyes snap open.

RING!

Jack sits bolt upright.

RING!

He scatters the chairs, sprinting for the studio.

FADE OUT: