FADE IN:

1   EXT. THE HIMALAYAS

Wide as all the world. Towering and timeless and rumbling mutely into the sky to scrape the floor of heaven.

We're GLIDING BETWEEN them as if on a cloud, and CARTER'S VOICE is quiet and humble and yet somehow makes us feel as though he knows a great many things we don't.

CARTER (V.O.)
Edward Perriman Cole died in May.
It was a Sunday afternoon, and there wasn't a cloud in the sky...

One mountain rises above the rest. A plume of ice and snow billows from its wedge-shaped peak which thrusts up into the jet stream.

CARTER (V.O.)
It's difficult to understand the sum of a person's life... Some people will tell you it's measured by the ones left behind. Some believe it can be measured in faith. Some say by love... Other folks say life has no meaning at all.

We're MOVING HIGHER now as the mountain looms closer, drawing us UP its massive shoulders.

CARTER (V.O.)
Me, I believe that you measure yourself by the people who measure themselves by you.

CONTINUING OVER ridges and glaciers towards the peak.

CUT TO:

2   EXT. MOUNT EVEREST

A SKI POLE THRUSTING THROUGH A CRUST OF FROZEN SNOW.

The CLIMBER is wrapped in a hooded mountaineering suit and his face is protected by an oxygen mask and ski goggles.

With great effort, he lifts his right foot and plants it forward next to the ski pole, his thin breath swept away by the exertion as he turns to take in the view of the entire world beneath him...

(CONTINUED)
CARTER (V.O.)
What I can tell you for sure is that by any measure, Edward Cole lived more in his last days on earth than most folks manage to wring out of a lifetime.

The climber turns back to the summit.

CARTER (V.O.)
I know that when he died his eyes were closed, and his heart was open... And I know that he could hear the mountain...

The climber plants the second ski pole and takes another agonizing step as we RISE HIGH ABOVE him until he becomes small on the face of the giant.

CARTER (V.O.)
And I know the mountain heard him in return.

And we slowly...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

A CIGARETTE

ASHING INTO AN EMPTY "CHOCK FULL O' NUTS" COFFEE CAN.

MANNY (O.S.)
Name the five Presidents whose last names begin with the letter 'H.'

3 INT. McCREATH SERVICE CENTER - DAY

CARTER CHAMBERS (66) is a black mechanic with a worn, but thoughtful demeanor. He leans back against the El Camino he is working on.

His partner MANNY (26) is beneath the hood, working on the engine. Next to him is a book of Trivia.

CARTER

(CONTINUED)
MANNY
Ah, I thought I'd get you with the double Harrisons. You're sick, you know that.

CARTER
You think that's sick? Can you name their wives?

MANNY
No.

CARTER
Neither can I.

From across the shop:

ANOTHER MECHANIC
Carter, when do they need the Camaro?

CARTER
Yesterday.

MANNY
(reading from the book)
All right, I got one for you. Who invented the radio?

CARTER
Now that's a tough one.

MANNY
What do you know, I finally got you.

CARTER
No, I just don't know if you're looking for the guy who everyone thinks invented the radio or the guy who actually invented it.

MANNY
It says here...

CARTER
Marconi, right?

MANNY
Yeah. It ain't him?

(CONTINUED)
CARTER
Well, he's generally accepted as the inventor. In fact, he won the Nobel Prize for it in 1909. The truth is a man by the name of Nikola Tesla patented the basic system of radio in 1896, a system Marconi used to get his own patent several years later.

The PHONE RINGS. As Carter ambles towards it, where it hangs on the wall next to a calendar of vintage Ford Mustangs:

CARTER
Tesla fought Marconi until the day he died in 1943. That same year, the Supreme Court held Marconi's patent invalid, recognizing Nikola Tesla as the primary inventor of radio.

MANNY
You really are sick.

Carter picks up the phone.

CARTER
(into phone)
This is Carter... Oh, hey, Ginnie... Yep... About time. What did he say?... Uh-huh... What does that mean?... Okay, then.

He quietly hangs up the phone and removes the butt from between his lips as smoke dribbles from his mouth. He looks at the cigarette for a moment, then drops it to the floor.

He steps on the cigarette as he walks in a daze past Manny and out the door of the garage.

CUT TO:

INT. RIVERSIDE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - CHAMBER - DAY

ANGLE ON A HAND-HAMMERED COPPER THERMOS releasing a waft of rich steam as the dark contents are poured into a cup which is lifted to the waiting nostrils of EDWARD COLE who inhales deeply.
Kopi Luwak. The rarest beverage in the world.

Sitting on the dais, the BOARD CHAIRMAN who's flanked by four fellow BOARD MEMBERS who are moving to their seats. At an adjacent table are representatives of the county health department and Winwood Hospital administrators.

Edward is in his mid-60s. He's dressed casually almost in defiance of the occasion.

He hands the cup over to RICHARD, one of several EXECUTIVES in Edward's retinue.

EDWARD (coaxing with his hand) Here, take a whiff.

Richard bends his head to the cup, sniffing it.

BOARD CHAIRMAN Mister Cole? We're ready to begin.

EDWARD Hold on a sec.

Edward nods for Richard to take a sip. Realizing he has to take a sip in order for the meeting to proceed, Richard takes a tentative sip. Edward's eyes bore into Richard's, waiting for a response.

EDWARD Well?

RICHARD (clearly doesn't get it) Wow. Really good.

EDWARD (to Richard) 'Really good.'

BOARD CHAIRMAN Mister Cole... sir?
EDWARD
You know what a Philistine is, Jim?

RICHARD
Sir, it's Richard.

EDWARD
(coughing)
That's right, Phil. Give them the spiel.

Richard takes the podium.

RICHARD
Thank you, Mister Chairman, fellow supervisors. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to address you today. We at the Cole group feel that the decline of Winwood Hospital is a direct result of significant fiscal mismanagement.

COUNTY HEALTH DIRECTOR
I beg your pardon! This --

RICHARD
Overhead costs are nearly double what they should be. Your lease and land costs were similarly overbid. Donations have atrophied to the point where you've fallen well behind the curve in research, pediatrics, oncology, and MRI.

Edward COUGHS again as he watches the proceedings with seeming disinterest. The administrators range from ashamed to apoplectic.

RICHARD
The Cole Group has successfully privatized fifteen public hospitals in the past seven years, each of which now provides, or is being re-designed to provide, the highest standard of medical care to their communities.

FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR
Despite being grossly understaffed?

RICHARD
The better the doctors, the less need there is for --

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

BOARD CHAIRMAN
What about beds? There have been reports that you increase the number of patients to the point of overpopulation.

RICHARD
Patient density has always been...

COUNTY HEALTH DIRECTOR
And your emergency rooms are known to be --

Edward abruptly stands.

EDWARD
I run hospitals, not health spas. Two beds to a room. No exceptions. Look, I passed up a lunch with Michelle Pfeiffer to be here. So can we desist from further inane posturing. You need me, boys and girls... I don't need you. Now, there's a sizeable check in this envelope. Let me know if you decide to cash it.

Coughs into his handkerchief again.

BOARD CHAIRMAN
Mister Cole?

Edward stares in shock at the ugly puddle of clotted blood staining the white silk of the handkerchief...

DISSOLVE TO:

5 INT. GREYHALL MEMORIAL ONCOLOGY CENTER - DAY

A pair of elevator doors open at the far end of a long hallway emitting THOMAS, mid-30s, lugging a set of two massive suitcases and a bunch of flowers tucked under his arm as he counts room numbers.

6 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Thomas barrels in and drops the bags onto the empty bed by the door. He opens the first suitcase, beginning to set up the room with practiced efficiency...

He plugs in a cell phone cradle and sets it on the bedside table along with the laptop computer...

(CONTINUED)
He places a Royal Classic copper coffee siphon on the window sill, along with a copper Thermos and saucers and spoons, and an elegant wooden box.

Finally he removes a crystal vase and stuffs the flowers into it. VOICES are heard in the hallway -- a commotion drawing closer.

Anticipating their arrival, Thomas, looking for a place for the flowers, quickly walks around the bed and yanks open the separator curtain which bisects the room, revealing Carter.

THOMAS
What are you doing here?

Carter is thin and drawn and plugged into a network of tubes. His bedside table is stacked high with an imposing tower of books.

The wall behind him is collaged with get well cards and pictures of his family: two sons, several grandchildren and a beautiful 20-year-old daughter.

CARTER
Oh, you know, fighting for my life... You?

THOMAS
No, I was just surprised that...

Just as the hallway brigade bursts into the room as doctors and nurses and handlers hover over --

EDWARD
(lying in a gurney)
And tell Dr. Shit-for-brains I want a full rundown on this Bleomycin drip he wants to get me on. What's the upside? I hear it eats your lungs. When I address Congress next month, I don't want to be breathing through a hole in my throat.

DOCTOR
That's not exactly what --

EDWARD
Where the hell is Thomas?

THOMAS
In plain view, sir.

(CONTINUED)
NURSE SHING
We're going to move you into the bed now.

EDWARD
I can do it myself, goddamnit. I ain't dead yet.

He tries to lift himself into the bed, but falls to the floor.

THOMAS
How 'bout now?

EDWARD
Have I fired you lately?

THOMAS
Not since the Oprah interview.

He bends down and helps Edward into the bed. Edward settles a moment before noticing Carter.

EDWARD
Who the hell is that?

CARTER
Who the hell are you?

CARTER (V.O.)
That was the first time I laid eyes on Edward Cole. An inauspicious beginning to be sure.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

ELECTRIC CLIPPERS SHAVING SMOOTH AVENUES ONTO EDWARD'S SCALP.

Edward's mood has not improved.

EDWARD
I'll be damned if I'm gonna spend the next three weeks lying next to this guy. He looks half dead already.

THOMAS
You can't have your own room. It would create enormous PR problems.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

EDWARD
I don't give a shit about PR. I want my own room. It's my hospital, for Christ's sake. Don't tell me I can't have my own room.

(to Carter)
No offense, pal.

THOMAS
You have defended this policy publicly countless times. You run hospitals, not health spas. Two beds to a room. No exceptions.

EDWARD
I never been sick before.

NURSE SHING squeezes a small dollop of cream onto Edward's pate.

NURSE SHING
(rubbing the cream into his scalp)
Dr. Eldridge will be in in a minute to dot you up.

She walks out, leaving him to stare in horror at his newly-bald reflection in the mirror...

EDWARD
Jesus.

(to Thomas)
Thomas, don't let me wake up paralyzed.

THOMAS
I'll do what I can.

CARTER
(after a beat)
This really your hospital?

EDWARD
Yeah, pretty much.

CARTER
Might wanna do something about the pea soup.

CUT TO:
Dr. Hollins and his surgical team operate on Edward who lies in fragile stasis.

CARTER (V.O.)
By the morning of the surgery, the cancer had spread so far throughout Edward's body that the doctors gave him only a five percent chance to survive... but then they didn't account for how pissed off they'd made him.

PUSH INTO Edward's inert face which, even under sedation, appears annoyed at the intrusion.

From the operating lights we...

WHITE DISSOLVE TO:

Edward lies quietly, eyes closed. Carter is sitting up in bed eating a home-cooked meal brought by his wife VIRGINIA (mid-60s), who sits in a chair beside his bed.

VIRGINIA
No visitors come in to see him?

CARTER
(shakes his head)
He's been sleeping a lot since they brought him back.

VIRGINIA
That's another reason I don't miss nursing... Always so sad seeing a patient like that all alone after that kind of surgery.

CARTER
(nods sympathetically)
'Least it's quiet.

Virginia's unsure if he's being editorial about her presence.

They sit in silence for several moments. She looks at him as if expecting him to speak. Her discomfort is palpable.

VIRGINIA
Rachel called this morning.

(CONTINUED)
CARTER
How is she doing?

VIRGINIA
She's auditioning for first violin in next semester's symphony.

CARTER
That's wonderful.

Another beat... Finally, she starts to collect her things.

VIRGINIA
You need any more books?

CARTER
Nah, I'm good.

Nods at the healthy stack of tomes on his bedside table.

VIRGINIA
(after another beat)
Got your meds for the night?

CARTER
Already took 'em.

VIRGINIA
How about pillows?

CARTER
I'm fine... Thank you, Virginia.

VIRGINIA
(forcing a smile)
Sure.

A beat as she girds herself, working up to --

VIRGINIA
I can stay awhile if...

She takes his hand...

CARTER
No sense in both of us being useless in the morning.

VIRGINIA
Okay.

(CONTINUED)
She pulls her hand away, then leans over to kiss him, but the closeness is awkward. Her eyes fall, feeling the lack as they touch cheeks.

She squeezes his hand then turns to go, disappearing through the door. He stares at the empty doorway for several moments.

EDWARD  
(eyes still closed)  
She gone?

CARTER  
What?

Edward opens his eyes for the first time, looks over at Carter.

EDWARD  
As something of a public health expert, it's my belief more people die from visitors than disease.

Edward and Carter exchange looks.

CARTER (V.O.)  
What is a BlackBerry?

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Edward opens his eyes to see Carter's television turned on to "Jeopardy."

ALEX TREBEK (V.O.)  
(on TV)  
This Swedish berry is also known as the cowberry.  

CARTER  
What is a lingonberry?

CONTESTANT (V.O.)  
(on TV)  
I'll take It's the Berries for eight hundred, Alex.

Edward, who's in some pain, watches with an "I can't believe I'm stuck in a room with this guy" expression.

(CONTINUED)
ALEX TREBEK (V.O.)
(on TV)
In a top 40 hit of 1956, this 'Berry' told Beethoven to roll over.

CARTER
Who is Chuck Berry?

EDWARD
Hey, pal, do you mind...?
He indicates lowering the volume.

CARTER
Huh? Oh. Sorry.
(lowers the volume to the TV)
What is The Mariana Trench?

Just as Dr. HOLLINS enters.

DR. HOLLINS
Morning, Edward. How you feeling?

EDWARD
Dumb question.

Dr. Hollins nods approvingly. Marks the chart.

DR. HOLLINS
How's the catheter?

EDWARD
Love it. I don't know how I ever did without it.

DR. HOLLINS
Good. Humor is a healthy sign.

EDWARD
Kiss my ass.

DR. HOLLINS
As is surliness.

He checks the integrity of the bulging plastic Groshong catheter implanted several inches above Edward's heart.

DR. HOLLINS
The operation went well. All the post-op brain scans were clean. Now we go after the sarcoma in the rest of your body.

(MORE)
DR. HOLLINS (CONT'D)
Unfortunately, your blood markers are extremely high, so we'll need to begin the first course of chemo this morning.

EDWARD
I love the smell of chemo in the morning.

DR. HOLLINS
I'll be back to check on you later.

Dr. Hollins turns to leave.

CARTER
Say, Doc. Do you think you could --

DR. HOLLINS
I'm sorry. I'm running late. Who's your doctor?

CARTER
Dr. Gibian.

DR. HOLLINS
I'll let the nurse know.

Walks out.

CARTER
 Appreciate it.

Edward tries to sit up but is held in place by the web of tubes running in and out of his body.

CARTER
Bitch, isn't it?
(back to the TV)
What are quarks?

Edward studies him.

EDWARD
How long you been here?

CARTER
Oh, in and out the last few months. Got me on an experimental treatment now. What is a quadratic equation?

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
(after a beat)
So, how rough is it?

CARTER
The chemo?
(shrugs)
Not too bad. If you don't mind 'round-the-clock vomiting, watching your veins turn black and the feeling that your bones are made of napalm... it's a day at the beach.

EDWARD
(paling slightly)
Well that's a relief.

CARTER
Of course I hear people react differently. You'll know by tonight.

After a beat...

CARTER
If you don't mind my asking, what's that contraption you got over there?

Points over to the high-tech coffee maker.

EDWARD
It's a siphon. Makes coffee.

Fumbles for the nurse's call button.

CARTER
What else does it do?

EDWARD
What else does it have to do?

After another beat...

CARTER
Did you know that coffee was originally discovered by a shepherd in Ethiopia?

EDWARD
(struggling with the call button)
You don't say.
Carter eases himself out of his bed and begins to unravel Edward's call button, while continuing with his story...

CARTER
It's true. It seems his goats had been eating the berries of an unfamiliar bush. Before long, they were running and jumping all over the place, having just a great old time. The shepherd took some branches to the local monastery where the abbot decided to roast them. When the berries started to burn the beans inside gave off such a pleasant aroma that they brewed them into a stew.

EDWARD
(could care less)
Stew, huh?

CARTER
Stew.
(unable to stop himself)
So within a few hundred years, it spread to Arabia and Europe.
(as Edward stares at him)
Even Sumatra, like that hooch you got over there.

EDWARD
It's called Kopi Luwak.

CARTER
I know what it is.

EDWARD
You do?

CARTER
Never catch me drinking that shit.

EDWARD
You've tried it?

CARTER
No. I'm more of an instant coffee man.

He hands Edward the liberated call button.

CARTER
Here ya go.
EDWARD
Thanks.

CARTER
No problem.

Edward just looks at Carter.

EDWARD
You always had those freckles?

CARTER
As far as I know.

EDWARD
Nice. My uh... nice.

CUT TO:

A LID OF AN ALUMINUM CONTAINER
BEING LIFTED, REVEALING AN APPETIZING ITALIAN MEAL.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

As Thomas unpacks aluminum containers from Giorgio Baldi's. Spoons the contents onto a large plate.

THOMAS
Okay, we got prosciutto and melon, some Burata mozzarell', and a veal Paillard. Giorgio sends his best.

CARTER
You sure you want to eat all that?

EDWARD
That's the plan.

He's cut off as Thomas clears his throat loudly.

EDWARD
What?
(to Carter; off Thomas' look)
Oh. Uh, you want Thomas to make you a plate? Tommy, fix a plate for, uh --

CARTER
Carter.

(CONTINUED)
**CONTINUED:**

EDWARD
First name or last?

CARTER
First.

EDWARD
Interesting. So, you want uh...? Might cheer you up?

CARTER
I'll pass.

Edward pops a piece of fried artichoke in his mouth and chews it loudly.

EDWARD
You sure? Yum, yum... best in L.A.

CUT TO:

EDWARD
PUKING HIS KIDNEYS OUT.

**13 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT**

As his sumptuous dinner is jettisoned to the floor. He's moaning and spitting.

Carter never looks up from his book...

CARTER (under his breath)
Still the best in L.A.?

Continues reading as Edward continues purging in the b.g...

DISSOLVE TO:

**14 OMITTED**

**15 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT**

Edward is sleeping. The bandages have been removed from his head, which is littered with uneven patches of stubble.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Sitting up in his bed, Carter looks haggard as he removes an old photo from an envelope. On the back of the photo is written: "DEAR DAD, HERE'S TO GETTING BACK ON YOUR FEET. CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU AND MOM DANCING AGAIN. LOVE, RACHEL."

He flips it over to see a long-forgotten shot of him and his wife in their twenties, dancing at a sock-hop, laughing, and clutching each other... A lifetime ago...

DISSOLVE TO:
17 INT. HOSPITAL BATHROOM - DAY
Edward kneels on the floor, head resting on the toilet seat, fast asleep. He’s woken by VOICES coming from the room. He weakly pushes open the door to see who it is.

18 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION
ROGER, 47, Carter's oldest son...

ROGER
Maya made the honor roll again.

CARTER
Bet your ass she did. That's another fifty I owe her. That child of yours gonna put me in the poor house.

ROGER
You and me both.

19 INT. HOSPITAL BATHROOM - DAY
Edward tries to get the taste out of his mouth as he glances down into the bowl.

EDWARD
Oh, man.

Wipes his lips and flushes...

20 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION
Edward shuffles out, shaking his head.

EDWARD
(to himself)
Somewhere, some lucky bastard's having a heart attack right now.

ROGER
Mr. Cole.

Edward gives a small wave without looking up.

EDWARD
Gentlemen.

Climbs gingerly into his own bed as Roger hands Carter a small object, badly wrapped with childish wrapping paper.

(CONTINUED)
ROGER
It's from Kai. Says when he grows up, he wants to be a mechanic like his granddaddy.

CARTER
Hope you talked him out of that.

Edward watches as Carter peels off the wrapping revealing a keychain with a small, die-cast-'65 Ford Mustang GT pendant.

ROGER
It's a Shelby 350.

CARTER
How about that. Always wanted one'a those.

ROGER
Kai remembered.

CARTER
He's a good boy.

ROGER
Mom's worried you're not getting enough rest.

CARTER
Mmm-hmmmm.

ROGER
She loves you, Pop.

CARTER
(averts his eyes)
Mmm-hmmmm.

A beat... Roger decides not to pursue it. Gets ready to leave...

ROGER
You'll call when you get the test results.

CARTER
If that day ever comes. *

ROGER
I love you, Pop. *

Kisses him goodbye. Roger exits.
EDWARD
Is he your oldest?

CARTER
Yeah.

EDWARD
What's he do?

CARTER
Roger's a tax attorney.

Carter hands a picture of his immediate family to Edward. He points to Lee.

CARTER
His brother Lee is an engineer.

EDWARD
Who's the little lady?

CARTER
Rachel's the youngest of the three.

EDWARD
Big age difference.

CARTER
She was a surprise. We'd hardly gotten the boys out of the house when she came along. Girl can make you cry the way she plays the violin.

His swollen pride is evident as Edward hands the picture back with a polite smile.

CARTER
You got kids?

EDWARD
Depends.
(takes a beat)
Never stayed married long enough.

CARTER
That's all right, I been married long enough for the both of us.

EDWARD
And how's that going?

CARTER
It's going.
EDWARD
That good, huh? Hey, don't get me wrong. I love being married.
Been there four times. Problem is I love being single, too. Hard to do them both at the same time.
God knows I tried.

CARTER
Nobody's perfect.

EDWARD
The only successful marriage I had was me and my work. I started making money when I was sixteen, and that was that.

CARTER
I wanted to be a history professor.

EDWARD
Nobody's perfect.

CARTER
Made it through two months of City College before Virginia gave me the news... Young, black and broke with a baby on the way, you take the first job they offer you. I always meant to go back. But...
Forty-five years goes by pretty fast.

EDWARD
Like smoke through a keyhole.

CUT TO:

LIFE IN HOSPITAL SEQUENCE

(NOTE: ALL SCENES in this MONTAGE have been COMPLETELY RENUMBERED. ONLY use numbers from this draft on.)

20A INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Carter is sleeping. Edward is dragging his I.V. to the bathroom.
20B INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT
Edward is reading. Carter is dragging his I.V. to the bathroom.

20C INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY
Edward is sleeping. Carter is reading. Nurse Shing replaces Edward's I.V. drip. (Edward makes comment about morphine.)

20D INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY
Edward is sleeping. Nurse Shing is drawing blood from Carter.

20E INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT
Edward watches TV. After a moment, he turns it OFF. Next to him Carter struggles with pain. Edward feels for him.

20F INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (RAIN)
Now the roles are reversed as Carter reads a book and Edward is struggling in pain. Carter looks over in sympathy.

20G INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT
Carter is sleeping. Edward is lying in bed.

    EDWARD
    I'm so confused. I wonder if I have lost my mind already. Jesus, no, no Jesus I'm not praying. I'm talking to myself. I got nobody to talk to.

Edward gets up out of bed and wanders over to Carter's bed.

    EDWARD
    Are you awake? Carter, I'm not the only one who farts in his sleep.
    (after a long pause)
    I'm scared to death.
Edward and Carter are playing gin.

EDWARD
You know, Nurse Shing could be the Angel of Death.

CARTER
What?

EDWARD
You think you're safe because she likes you better. But maybe she's trying to kill us both, you ever think of that?

CARTER
No.
(after a beat)
Gin.

EDWARD
Are you the devil?

Edward is dragging his I.V. to the bathroom.

Carter is dragging his I.V. to the bathroom.

Nurse Shing is giving Carter some pills. Then she gives Edward some pills.

Exposition: In 1909, Eldwood Baker --

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
-- of the Knickerbocker Whist Club of New York City was the man generally credited with the innovation and scoring of what has become modern gin rummy. Strangely, Baker achieved more notoriety posthumously as the victim of an unexplained murder. Many suspected at the hand of an irate card player.

EDWARD
You don't say. Eight.

CARTER
Four.

EDWARD
Happy?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON
Edward and Carter walk down the hallway together, dragging their I.V.'s.

EDWARD
Ever think about suicide?

CARTER
Suicide? Lord, no.

EDWARD
Thought so. Stage one.

CARTER
What?

EDWARD
The five stages.

CARTER
Oh, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance.

EDWARD
Of course you're not thinking of suicide. You're in stage one. Denial.

CARTER
What stage are you in?

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
Denial.

CARTER
And thinking of suicide.

As Edward and Carter walk away from us, we HEAR:

EDWARD
You ever see The Defiant Ones?

20Q INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY
Edward is having some blood drawn.

EDWARD
Can't you use the old blood?

20R INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (OVERCAST)
Edward is dragging his I.V. to the bathroom.

20S INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)
Carter is dragging his I.V. to the bathroom.
Edward, dragging his I.V., comes out of the bathroom. He passes Carter, dragging his I.V. on his way into the bathroom. They perfunctorily high-five each other.

CUT TO:

Edward is reading a Milton Friedman book.

Nurse Shing removes the empty bottle from the stand next to Carter's bed.

NURSE SHING
You won't be needing this anymore.

CARTER
That's it?

NURSE SHING
Fourth and final.

CARTER
When will we know something?

NURSE SHING
They'll have to run all the tests first, see where we stand.

CARTER
How long?

(CONTINUED)
NURSE SHING
Takes awhile. I'll get Dr. Gibian to schedule them as soon as I see him. I'm on for another hour. Anything you need?

CARTER
I'll take a clean bill of health if you got one.

(CONTINUED)
NURSE SHING
Hang in there, Carter.

CARTER
That's what I do.

She heads out as he checks his watch.

CARTER
(to Edward)
Mind if I turn this on?

Edward waves his hand dismissively. Carter dons a pair of headphones and tunes the television to "Jeopardy" and becomes immediately engrossed...

CARTER
What is The Great Divide?... What is somnambulism?...

Edward puts his book down. Glances over at Carter...

CARTER
What is the Hindenburg?

EDWARD
You ever miss one?

CARTER
(lifts one headphone off his ear)
What's that?

EDWARD
You ever miss one?

CARTER
(thinks a moment)
Oh, sure. Missed one last week. I mixed up optometrist with ophthalmologist.

EDWARD
That can happen.
(a beat)
Ever think about going on the show?

CARTER
Ahh, that's for other people. What is a banyan tree?

Edward studies him for a moment, then...

DISSOLVE TO:
THE SOUNDS OF A BASEBALL GAME.

Carter writes on a sheet of lined paper resting between the open pages of his book. We see the words:

INSERT - WORDS

BUCKET LIST

1. WITNESS SOMETHING TRULY MAJESTIC.

2.

EDWARD (O.S.)
Hit the cutoff, for Christ sake!
See, that's the problem with the game today.

BACK TO SCENE

Carter lowers the book just enough to reveal Edward watching TV on his stomach with his head propped on a pillow at the foot of his bed, stretching his tubes and cables to the limit as he berates the Dodgers.

EDWARD
No fundamentals. Did you ever read The Time of Your Life?

CARTER
By William Saroyan?

EDWARD
Yeah: 'No foundation all the way down the line.' When we were growing up... What are you doing?

CARTER
Nothing. Just scribbling.

EDWARD
Scribbling what?

(diverted by the TV)
Yeah, that's what ya wanna do, bounce a slider with a man on third! You see these kids today... Ah, I'm talking to myself.

Carter puts on a pair of headphones and listens to BACH'S CELLO SUITE NO. 1 in G-MAJOR.

(CONTINUED)
He returns to his list. He thinks a moment before writing the words: "HELP A COMPLETE STRANGER FOR THE GOOD."

When he looks up again, Hollins is standing at the foot of Edward's bed. The doctor's face is pinched and somber as he speaks... Edward listens implacably, his face impossible to read.

Carter slides the headphones off to listen...

DR. HOLLINS

Six months. A year if we're lucky. There's an experimental program we're conducting, and, though I don't want to get your hopes up, I think you'd be an excellent --

EDWARD

Doc.

DR. HOLLINS

-- candidate. It's cutting edge medicine. The odds are against you, but --

EDWARD

Hey, Doc.

Yes?

EDWARD

You're blocking my view.

DR. HOLLINS

Oh. Sorry.

Hollins steps to the side of the television. Stares for a beat.

DR. HOLLINS

Well, if you have any questions.

Waits another beat then starts for the door.

EDWARD

(eyes on the game)

One thing.

DR. HOLLINS

Yes.

* (CONTINUED)
EDWARD
Carter?

CARTER
Yeah?

EDWARD
'Something you wanted to ask Dr. Hollins?

(CONTINUED)
DR. HOLLINS
I'm sorry, I'm not familiar with
Mister Chambers' --

EDWARD
Well, get familiar.

Hollins stares at him but Edward's attention never leaves
the screen.

CARTER
Just want to know where I stand is
all.

Hollins nods...

DR. HOLLINS
Let me get your chart.

He walks out, leaving Carter staring at Edward's back.

ANGLE - EDWARD
WATCHING THE GAME.

Slowly his eyes fall from the screen as he contemplates
the news of the end of his life.

Carter searches for the right words...

CARTER
Edward...

Edward doesn't respond. A beat...

CARTER (V.O.)
There was a survey once; a
thousand people were asked, if
they could know in advance, would
they want to know the exact day of
their death.

Hollins enters reading from the chart as he starts to
speak to Carter...

CARTER (V.O.)
Ninety-six percent of them said
no.

Carter listens implacably...

(CONTINUED)
CARTER (V.O.)
I always kinda leaned toward the other four percent. I thought it would be liberating, knowing how much time you had left to work with.

He crumples the list he was working on into a ball...

CARTER (V.O.)
It turns out it's not.

He looks up at Edward who is staring back at him over his shoulder...

They hold the look for several moments. Finally...

CARTER
You want to play cards?

EDWARD
Thought you'd never ask.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON EDWARD fast asleep. A square of sunlight moves across his eyes. The light is cut off as someone moves past and begins cleaning up the mess of tissues and pill bottles on the bedside table.

The ray of light stutters until Edward opens his eyes to see Thomas straightening up his side of the room.

THOMAS
Rise and shine.

Edward, without even opening his eyes, gives Thomas the finger.

THOMAS
Or that.

Edward rolls over to see Carter, sleeping with his back to him.

He notices the crumpled ball of paper and catalogue on the floor between them. With some effort, he leans out of bed to reach for it.

THOMAS
I'll get it.

(CONTINUED)
Thomas hands Edward the paper.

**EDWARD**
Thomas, call Lisa at Sotheby's and tell her I won't be bidding this season.

**THOMAS**
I understand. Sir, I don't mean to be indelicate, but how do you want me to deal with your uh...

**EDWARD**
Death? Treat it as if it were your own. Now go get me one of those almond croissants and don't buy any green bananas.

Then Thomas exits.

Edward unravels it to reveal Carter's "Bucket List."
Edward scans the list of activities, scoffing under his breath.

**CARTER (O.S.)**
What are you doing?

**EDWARD**
What is this?

**CARTER**
Give it back.

**EDWARD**
What is it?

**CARTER**
Give it back.

**EDWARD**
It was on the floor. I didn't know it was a State secret.

**CARTER**
(sighs)
My freshman philosophy professor assigned this exercise in forward thinking. We had to make a list of all the things we dreamed of doing with our lives before we...

**EDWARD**
... before you 'kick the bucket.'
Cutesy.
CARTER
Back then I had things like, 'Make a million dollars.' 'First black president.' Young man's wishes. Thought I'd make up a new list, but then...

EDWARD
(reading)
'Help a complete stranger for the good.' 'Laugh until I cry.' Not to be judgmental, but -- This is extremely weak.

CARTER
Yeah, well, it's pointless now.

EDWARD
I would argue the exact opposite.

Grabs a red pen and begins to write his own list alongside Carter's.

CARTER
(sliding out of bed)
What are you doing?

EDWARD
A little rewrite, that's all. I mean, don't you want to go out with some balls? Guns blazing? Have a little fun?

CARTER
It's not about going out guns blazing, it's -- You're missing the --

EDWARD
What the hell is 'something majestic'?

CARTER
You ever been to the Himalayas?

EDWARD
'Drive a Shelby Cobra's' not bad. How 'bout Skydiving? Now we're onto something.

Starts to write again.
CARTER
We're on to something. Let me see that.

Carter snatches the paper from him. Grimaces at Edward's handwriting scrawled like graffiti alongside his own neatly blocked list.

CARTER
(reading)
'Kiss the most beautiful girl in the world'? How you figure on doing that?

EDWARD
Volume.

CARTER
(scanning the rest)
Get a tattoo? This is the sum of your ambition? Shit, I've taken baths deeper than you.

EDWARD
It's easy to be deep in freshman philosophy. What'd Dr. Hollins say? You've got months, right?

CARTER
Maybe a year.

EDWARD
You think forty-five years went by fast.

Edward hops out of bed. Grabs the list back from Carter and begins pacing...

EDWARD
We could do this. We should do this. Don't think about money. That's all I got is money.

CARTER
I don't know, I --

EDWARD
What don't you know?

CARTER
It was meant to be metaphorical, you know, trying to get a handle on --

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
Blah, blah, blah. Metaphors. I got news for you. Life is not for other people. You're the one cryin' you never took a shot. Here's your chance.

CARTER
To make a fool of myself?

EDWARD
Never too late. I mean, what do you think happens now? I go back and sit around listening to people talk about mezzanine financing and subordinated debt, pretending I care about dead money. You go home to some sentimental processional into death, with everyone standing around watching you die while you try to comfort them. Is that what you want, to be smothered by pity and grief? Well, not me. And, in your heart, I believe not you either, Carter.

Carter looks down at the keychain and flips it several times over his fingers. A beat...

EDWARD
We're both in the same boat. How's that for a metaphor? We got a real opportunity here.

CARTER
Opportunity. That's pretty twisted.

EDWARD
We still feel good, right? Energy's coming back. We're not in pain. Asymptomatic, the doc says. The way I see it, we can lie around here hoping for a miracle in some bullshit science experiment... or we can put some moves on.

Carter's mind churns... Finally, he looks up at Edward and smiles...

CARTER
Skydiving, huh?

... just as Virginia pushes through the door...
VIRGINIA
What kind of hospital is this?
There isn't an M.D. within a mile.

CARTER
Virginia, we need to talk.

VIRGINIA
What'd they say?

EDWARD
Mrs. Chambers, I'm going to give
you two some quiet time.

Edward exits to the hallway.

CARTER
It's not good.

CUT TO:

23 OMITTED

23A INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

VIRGINIA
I knew we should have gone to
U.C.L.A. The surgeons are better.
The post-op is --

CARTER
It wouldn't have made a
difference.

VIRGINIA
You don't know that. We're not
giving up. I want another
opinion.

Pulls out her cell phone and dials furiously.

CARTER
Virginia.

VIRGINIA
(into the phone)
Yes, Oncology please. Dr.
Veteri's office.

CARTER
Ginnie. No.

(CONTINUED)
VIRGINIA
Let me handle this.
(into the phone)
Dr. Veteri? Virginia Chambers...
Yes, that's right... Well, it's my
husband. Are you still running
that ECL662 study? Yes, I was
hoping I could --

Carter grabs the phone and closes it. After a beat...

CARTER
I'm going away for a while.

VIRGINIA
What are you talking about?

CARTER
Edward and I are going away.

VIRGINIA
Edward and you? Going away where?

CARTER
I don't expect you to understand.

VIRGINIA
You're damn right I don't
understand. I don't understand
how you can just give up like
this. How you can just, just...
quit fighting.

CARTER
Virginia...

VIRGINIA
Why don't you tell our children
that? See what they say when they
find out you've given up on them.

CARTER
Given up on them?! I got forty-
six years greased up under the
hood of a car to see that they
didn't want for anything! And
they didn't... I think I've earned
a little time for myself.

VIRGINIA
To do what? Run off with a total
stranger...

(CONTINUED)
CARTER
He's not a stranger.

VIRGINIA
I'm your wife.

CARTER
And I'm your husband... And I'm
their father. And I'm a grandfather.
And I'm a mechanic...

VIRGINIA
And you're a fool. A fool who
thinks he's figured out how not to
have cancer anymore.

CARTER
I'm sorry.

She stares at him for a moment, then slowly turns to go.
He watches as she walks out the door.

23B INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Virginia passes Edward. They make brief eye contact.

VIRGINIA
My husband's not for sale.

She walks away. After a beat, Carter enters the hallway,
stands next to Edward. They both watch as Virginia walks
away without looking back.

EDWARD
She hates me. Do you hate me?

CARTER
Not yet.

CARTER (V.O.)
And so it began.

DISSOLVE TO:
CARTER'S KEYCHAIN FLIPPING NERVOUSLY OVER HIS FINGERS.

WIDER as Carter, beneath a jump helmet, stares out the open rear door of an airplane at THE MOJAVE DESERT 8,000 feet below.

Carter's beginning to hyperventilate.

(CONTINUED)
CARTER
(muttering to himself)
Always scared to go up in an airplane, and now you wanna jump out of one on the whim of a maniac.
(as the keychain flips off his hand)
Dammit!

The keychain slides forward, towards the cockpit where Edward is seen from the back, talking with the pilots. Carter reaches out, but is held in place by KYLE, young and brawny, sitting immediately behind Carter. In fact, Carter is literally sitting in Kyle's lap.

KYLE
Wanna get it?

CARTER
How do you suggest we do that?

Kyle stands suddenly with Carter bound to his torso via a series of nylon jump straps. As his feet dangle, Carter pitches forward until his upper-body is almost horizontal while his hips are still vertically strapped to Kyle.

Kyle duck-walks the suspended Carter over to the keychain.

Carter extends his arms down but the keychain slides out of his grasp... and into Edward's outstretched hand.

Carter looks up at him. Edward holds out the keychain, Carter grabs it.

CARTER
Not a word.

Edward mimes buttoning his lips.

CARTER
(barks)
Back to the bench, Kyle!

Kyle waddles back to the bench.

EDWARD
(to Kyle)
You'll have to forgive him, Kyle. He's worried about the little woman.

(CONTINUED)
This has nothing to do with my wife.

Another INSTRUCTOR comes out and straps himself to Edward's back.

INSTRUCTOR
Thirty seconds to drop.

EDWARD
(to Carter)
The Sequel was like that. Never back me up on anything.

CARTER
The Sequel?

EDWARD
The second Mrs. Edward Cole. God, that woman hated me.

KYLE
Maybe because you called her The Sequel.

EDWARD
Gee, Kyle, I never looked at it that way.

INSTRUCTOR
Fifteen.

CARTER
I can't do this.

EDWARD
Sure ya can.

CARTER
No, really, I can't.

EDWARD
It's not the jump you're afraid of.

CARTER
The hell it isn't.

As the Instructor pulls the door open, filling the cabin with whipping wind.

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
You're just worried your chute
won't open and you'll show up at
your funeral as a Denver omelet.

CARTER
No, I'm pretty much just worried
the chute won't open.

Kyle stands and moves Carter closer to the door. Carter
eyes the abyss outside. Edward is nonplussed.

Carter screams as Kyle jumps and they disappear out the
doors. Edward watches them fall as Carter's arms wave
wildly, screaming.

EDWARD
Man's got some lungs. Life or
death. Roll the dice. No
progress in careful.
(turns to the Instructor)
Let's hit the silk.

EXT. SMALL AIRPLANE - DAY

As they leap from the plane, free-falling into the ether.
Everything goes quiet save for the flapping of their jump
suits.

ANGLE - EDWARD

having the time of his life...

ANOTHER ANGLE

CARTER'S eyes are frozen in terror... Edward dives INTO
FRAME as the Instructor locks hands with Kyle so that
Carter and Edward are once again face-to-face.

EDWARD
How about this, huh? This is
living.

Carter looks up at Edward, cheeks flapping in the
cyclonic wind.

(CONTINUED)
CARTER (terrified)
I hate your guts.

EDWARD
No you don't. We're loving it.
C'mon, take it in, baby.
Surrender to the void. Acceptance.

Looks back down at the quickly approaching ground.

CARTER
Which one of these cords do you pull?

He and Kyle separate, getting distance between them...

KYLE
We're not in the drop zone yet.
We could wind up in --

But before Kyle can finish the sentence, Carter panics and pulls the cord. They're jerked OUT OF FRAME.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Edward and the Instructor continue to drop, watching their counterparts' dueling chutes flapping high above.

INSTRUCTOR
Okay, let's deploy.

EDWARD (singing)
'I got a feeling I'm fallin'...'

INSTRUCTOR
We're in the red zone. Pull the cord.

EDWARD
'I got a feeling I'm falling in love.'

INSTRUCTOR
Pull the damn cord!

EDWARD
I was in love once.

But Edward just closes his eyes, spreads his arms out, and lets the gods decide.

(CONTINUED)
Finally, the Instructor yanks the cord jerking them OUT OF FRAME.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUMP SCHOOL - DAY

As Edward and Carter walk towards the limo, Edward takes out The Bucket list. With the red pen he crosses off "SKYDIVING!!" from his side of the list.

EDWARD
Tommy, we live to die another day.

THOMAS
How lucky for me.

EDWARD
No jokes, Thomas. Remember the will. You're so close now.

Edward walks ahead to the limo. Carter and Thomas follow.

CARTER
Lemme ask you, is it Tommy or Thomas?

THOMAS
It's Matthew, actually. But he finds that too biblical.

EDWARD (O.S.)
Let's eat something.

CARTER
Is he insane?

THOMAS
Depends.

LEE (V.O.)
Mom, you want some corn?

INT. DINING ROOM - DUSK

Virginia sits at the end of the dining room table.

(CONTINUED)
She's tuned out of the conversation, trying not to look at the empty chair at the opposite end of the table.

The rest of the Chambers family is there: Roger and his wife CHANDRA (40s), along with their daughter MAYA (14), and son KAI (6); Carter's younger son LEE (38), is there with his pregnant wife ELIZABETH (36); and finally Carter's daughter RACHEL (19).

(CONTINUED)
28 CONTINUED:

CHANDRA
How about some of the beans?

ROGER
Give her some of the corn. She likes corn.

He looks over at Virginia. Chandra reaches out and lays her hand over Virginia's. The PHONE RINGS in the kitchen.

ELIZABETH
Maybe she's just not hungry.

KAI
I'll get it!

Runs into the kitchen.

RACHEL
Can we please stop talking about Mom like she's not even here.

Lee
You mean like you just did?

RACHEL
Shut up, Lee.

KAI
Grandpa's on the phone. He wants to talk to Grandma!

Holds the phone out to Virginia. Everyone stops...

Roger looks over at Virginia. She shakes her head, doesn't want to speak to him.

ROGER
Here ya go, Kai.

Takes the phone from Kai.

ROGER
Pop, you okay? Where are you?

INTERCUT WITH:

29 EXT. URBAN TATTOO PARLOR - DUSK

Carter stands outside the doorway.

(CONTINUED)
CARTER Lancaster.

ROGER Lancaster? What the hell are ya -- Okay, give me the address and we'll come pick you up.

CARTER Where's your mother?

ROGER She... uhh...

CARTER Doesn't want to talk to me.

ROGER Not right now.

CARTER I need you all to look after her for me for a while.

ROGER When are you coming home?

CARTER I don't know.

ROGER You are coming home? (a beat) Pop?

CARTER Roger, this is not about any of you. I need to do this.

Roger listens for several moments while the others watch him. Finally his shoulders slump...

ROGER Okay, Pop... I understand. We love you, too.

He hangs the phone up. Turns to look at his family. Virginia gets up from the table and leaves the room.

Carter closes the cell phone. Takes a deep breath then exhales...

EDWARD (V.O.) Son of a bitch!
Carter enters to find Edward seated in a chair while a heavily-inked TATTOO ARTIST works Edward's shoulder with a BUZZING NEEDLE. Carter hands Edward the cell phone.

EDWARD
So, you decided?

CARTER
Huh? Oh, I dunno. Can't think of anything I wanna be stuck with permanently.

EDWARD
What's permanent? We're gonna be dead in five minutes.

The BUZZING STOPS.

TATTOO ARTIST
What?

EDWARD
Figure'a speech...
(to Carter)
So no Confederate flag or the black Jesus.

CARTER
I think I'm gonna --

EDWARD
-- pass, yeah sure.

CARTER
I never agreed to desecrate myself.

EDWARD
What, are you worried they won't let you into a Jewish cemetery? I'm not doing this if you're going to check everything with the old ball and chain. It's not like you're dumping her for another woman.

CARTER
(a beat)
I've never been with another woman.

Edward shakes off his incredulity... A beat...

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
Whoa, whoa, whoa. That's gotta be on the list!

CARTER
I don't think so.

EDWARD
(to Carter)
Sixty-six years and you never... Man oh man we should have a big orgy.

CARTER
No.

EDWARD
Orgy's not being unfaithful.

CARTER
No.

EDWARD
It's professional.

CARTER
I said no.

The Tattoo Artist finishes up.

TATTOO ARTIST
There you go. What do you think?

Edward studies his tattoo.

EDWARD
It's not bad, it's just... Do I really look that Old?

CARTER

EDWARD
I was going to say satanic. (to the Tattoo Artist) Excellent work.

TATTOO ARTIST
(to Edward) Thanks. (to Carter) You really should consider that orgy.

(CONTINUED)
Carter shoots the Tattoo Artist a look, then looks back at Edward.

EDWARD
I wouldn't have to be there.

CUT TO:
A PRISTINE '65 SHELBY MUSTANG GT 350R.

Carter lays his hand reverently on the hood.

( CONTINUED )
CONTINUED:

CARTER
Hello, darlin'.

Edward and Carter, dressed in racing suits, stand beside the Mustang and a souped-up Dodge Challenger.

Carter continues to stroke the hood.

EDWARD
You gonna cop a feel or drive it?

CARTER
We're just getting to know each other.

Carter slips into his car, Edward into his.

INT. MUSTANG - DAY

CARTER ADJUSTS THE HELMET-MIC IN FRONT OF HIS MOUTH. WITH THE KEY ON HIS SHELBY KEYCHAIN, HE STARTS IGNITION ON THE MUSTANG.

CARTER
You sure we're cleared for this?

The CHALLENGER comes to life, WHINING like an aircraft engine.

EDWARD (V.O.)
Of course we're cleared for it.
And what if we weren't?

CARTER
Just checking.

Both cars pull onto the track.

OMITTED

INT. MUSTANG - DAY

IN THE MUSTANG, Carter is in seventh heaven behind the wheel.

EXT./INT. CHALLENGER/MUSTANG - DAY

The Challenger quickly pulls even with the Mustang.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

EDWARD
C'mon, tap it, baby. Let's see what she's got.

CARTER
Oh, we're doing just fine.

EDWARD
You sound like a guy going to the junior prom.

CARTER
You sound like someone looking for an ass whuppin'.

EDWARD
Ass whuppin'? You got nothing.

CARTER
I got enough for you, sonny Jim dangling.

INSERT - CARTER'S FOOT
Hitting the GAS.

OMITTED

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY
MUSTANG ZOOMING ahead of Challenger.

INT. CHALLENGER - DAY
Edward -- reacting to the challenge.

INSERT - EDWARD
Hitting the GAS.

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY
The Challenger pulling even with the Mustang.

INT. CHALLENGER - DAY
Edward -- looking over to Carter.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

EDWARD
Did you just make a penis reference?

INT. MUSTANG - DAY

CARTER
What of it?

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY
The Mustang slams into the side of the Challenger.

INT. CHALLENGER - DAY

EDWARD
Jesus, you're gonna kill us both.

INT. MUSTANG - DAY

CARTER
What if I did?

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY
The Mustang slams against the Challenger again.

INT. CHALLENGER - DAY

EDWARD
You're breaking evil on me.

INT. MUSTANG & CHALLENGER - DAY

CARTER
Evil? I'll show you evil. I'll show you goddamn Evil Knievel. Pick up on this, chicken man.

EDWARD
Chicken man.

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY
The Mustang makes a leap, then exits the track. The Challenger also makes the leap.
EDWARD
Chicken man?

CARTER
Buck, buck.

The Mustang races under the grandstand with the Challenger in pursuit.

Up ahead are two tunnels. The cars race towards, then enter the tunnels.

Carter in the dark as sparks fly.

Edward also in the dark, trying to negotiate the tunnel.

The Mustang exits the tunnels, but where is the Challenger?

Edward is stuck. He tries but the engine won't turn over.

Carter checks his rear view mirror. Where is Edward?

The MUSTANG SCREECHES to a halt.

Carter looks back at the tunnels only to find the Challenger emerging with Edward pushing. (CONTINUED)
Carter then gets out of his car and shouts back to Edward.

CARTER
You might want to get that looked at. I know a good mechanic.

EXT. SANTA MONICA AIRPORT - SUNSET
A GULFSTREAM G-550 TAKING OFF INTO THE SKY.

CUT TO:
41A INT. GULFSTREAM PRIVATE JET - SUNSET

Carter, Edward, and Thomas aboard the elegantly-appointed private plane. A wide-eyed Carter takes it all in as a FLIGHT ATTENDANT hands him a drink.

CARTER
How much money you got anyway?

EDWARD
Didn't anyone tell you it's rude to talk about money?

CARTER
Never knew anyone with enough money to ask.

DISSOLVE TO:

41B INT. GULFSTREAM PRIVATE JET - NIGHT

The lights are low. Carter lies under a blanket, eyes closed. In the front of the cabin, Thomas is fast asleep. At the rear of the plane, the bathroom door opens, and Edward enters the cabin. He casually grabs a cookie, checks to see that everyone is still sleeping, puts the cookie down, then gestures to the bathroom. The FLIGHT ATTENDANT emerges, tucking in her blouse. Edward makes his way to his seat and sits. Carter, his eyes now open, just looks at him and shakes his head.

EDWARD

Edward grabs a magazine. Carter stares out the window, taking in the night sky.

CARTER
It's unimaginably beautiful.

EDWARD
I always love flying over the polar cap. Above the desolation.

CARTER
Look at all the stars. This really is one of God's good ones.

EDWARD
So you think a being of some sort did all this?

CARTER
You don't?

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
You mean do I believe if I look up in the sky and promise this or that, the biggie will make all this go away? No.

CARTER
So ninety-five percent of the people on Earth are wrong?

EDWARD
(shrugs)
If life has taught me anything, it's that ninety-five percent of the people are always wrong.

CARTER
It's called faith.

EDWARD
I envy people who have faith. I just can't get my head around it.

CARTER
Maybe your head is in the way.

EDWARD
Carter, we've all had hundreds of these discussions. And every one of them finally hits the same wall. Is there a sugar plum fairy or not? And nobody has ever gotten over that wall.

CARTER
So what do you believe?

EDWARD
I resist all beliefs.

CARTER
No Big bang? Random universe?

EDWARD
We live, we die and the wheels on the bus go 'round and 'round.

CARTER
What if you're wrong?

EDWARD
I'd love to be wrong. If I'm wrong, I win.

(CONTINUED)
CARTER
I'm not sure it works that way.

EDWARD
You're not claiming to know something I don't?

CARTER
No, I just have faith...

EDWARD
Hallelujah, brother. And pass the mustard.

CUT TO:
LOOKING DOWN ON the 10th Century Moorish village built atop a mountain whose slopes plunge into the Mediterranean.

The village is dominated by the large stone CHATEAU DE LA CHEVRE D'OR ("House of the Golden Goat").

CUT TO:

Edward and Carter sit at the premiere window table in the dining room in what is arguably the world's greatest restaurant. Both men are garbed in new, beautifully tailored suits. Carter pops a caviar-laden toast point into his mouth.

After a beat...

CARTER
You know how they harvest caviar, don't you?

EDWARD
Hit me.

CARTER
When the female sturgeon is caught, the fisherman has to take great care that she dies peacefully. If she feels at all threatened, she'll secrete a sour chemical that will ruin the eggs.

EDWARD
Sounds like my third wife.

(beat)
The woman thought mayonnaise came from a plant.

Carter takes a sip of champagne.

CARTER
I could get used to this.

EDWARD
That also sounds like my third wife.

Edward stares out at the view.

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
Thirty years I've been coming here. First time with a guy.

CARTER
I'm flattered.

After a beat...

EDWARD
Emily's tenth birthday was the best.

CARTER
Who's Emily?

EDWARD
My little -- Well, she's not so little anymore, she's --

CARTER
You have a daughter? I thought you said --

EDWARD
Yeah well... I didn't know you then. Anyway, I don't see her.

After a silence, Carter pulls the list from his breast pocket.

EDWARD
What are you doing?

CARTER
Maybe it's time.

Writes at the top of the list: GET BACK IN TOUCH.

EDWARD
Cross it off.

CARTER
Why?

EDWARD
(grabs the list)
Why?

Edward snatches the pen and crosses it off himself.

Several moments pass as Edward's reaction sits pregnantly between them. Carter, feeling discomfort, suddenly gets up from the table.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:  (2)

EDWARD
What's the matter?

CARTER
Excuse me.

EDWARD
Where are you going?

He walks away, leaving Edward with his caviar...

EDWARD
Oi, just like a broad.

Edward sits a moment, then finally throws his napkin on the table and follows after Carter.

WE FOLLOW EDWARD towards the back where he enters...

INT. LA CHEVRE D'OR MEN'S ROOM - DUSK

Carter stands at one of the sinks, back turned as he rubs his shirt with a towel.

EDWARD
Look, I'm sorry. Sometimes I get a little overbearing.

Carter turns to reveal the front of his shirt is soaked in blood.

EDWARD
Jesus Christ!

CARTER
It's all right.

EDWARD
Maybe we should get you to a hospital.

CARTER
The cap on my catheter came loose is all. Look, it's already stopped. I'm okay. Let's just go.

OMITTED

EXT. CHATEAU - NIGHT

A beautiful old French chateau.
46 INT. CHATEAU LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Edward and Carter enter an elegantly-furnished living room.

CARTER
How much money do you have?

EDWARD
Don't bleed on the carpet.

CARTER
Nice soak in a tub, I'll be good as new.

Thomas is on the phone.

THOMAS
(into phone)
Okay, we're all set then.
(hangs up; then to Edward)
All right. It took some doing, but I rearranged everything.
Cairo tomorrow, then Tanzania for two days, then Johannesburg on Saturday.

EDWARD
Thomas, I want to say you're irreplaceable, but I'd be lying.

THOMAS
I cherish your honesty.

CARTER (O.S.)
Look at this! They got 'Jeopardy' in the bathroom.

EDWARD
What?

THOMAS
On the T.V. 'Jeopardy'.

Thomas exits. Edward's CELL PHONE RINGS.

EDWARD (to himself)
'Jeopardy' in French?

Edward picks up his cell phone, looks at the number displayed. Doesn't recognize it.

EDWARD
Hello.
INT. CARTER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

INTERCUT: VIRGINIA STANDING IN HER KITCHEN.

VIRGINIA
Mister Cole?... This is Virginia Chambers.

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
Oh, yeah, hi. Lemme get Carter for you.

VIRGINIA
Actually, I called to speak to you.

EDWARD
Oh.

VIRGINIA
Is he alright?

EDWARD
Uh, yeah. He's fine.

VIRGINIA
(after a beat)
May I ask where you are?

EDWARD
Uh, France, actually. Tomorrow we're supposed to fly down to...

VIRGINIA
Give him back to me.

EDWARD
(a beat)
Virginia. May I call you Virginia. I'm not sure I can...

VIRGINIA
I'm not asking for his sake... Mr. Cole, I've been a nurse my entire adult life. Had a ringside seat to more human tragedy than any woman should ever have to bear. I'm prepared for my husband to die... I'm just not prepared to lose him while he's still alive.

Edward stares into space... Nothing he can say.

CARTER (V.O.)
Who is Howdy-Doody?

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOTEL SUITE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Carter lazes in the massive marble tub, his face largely obscured by mountainous bubbles as he watches a satellite feed of "Jeopardy" on a small television.

(CONTINUED)
CARTER
Who are Bert and Ernie?

There's a KNOCK on the door.

CARTER
Entrez-vous.

EDWARD
You're looking... uh... buoyant.

CARTER
(re: the TV and his surroundings)
Never been in a tub where my feet couldn't reach.

Edward pulls a chair next to the tub.

CARTER
Who is Spiro Agnew?

EDWARD
You know, I've been thinking. You know, with the catheter and everything, maybe we should put this on hold for a while.

CARTER
Don't worry about me... I'm fine.

EDWARD
It's not that... It's just. If you're worried about letting me down... it's easy for me. I mean, you've got your family to think about.

Carter turns the TV OFF...

CARTER
You spoke to Virginia.

This stops Edward.

CARTER
Why do you think I'm doing this?

EDWARD
Because I talked you into it.

After a beat...
Edward, you're strong, but you're not that strong.

(beat)

When Rachel left for college there was a hole. There was no more homework, no more Little League games, recitals, school plays, kids crying, fights, skinned knees. For the first time in forty years, I looked at Virginia without all the noise, without all the distractions, and I couldn't remember how it felt when I couldn't walk down the sidewalk without holding her hand. She was the same girl I fell in love with. She hadn't changed, but somehow everything was different. We lost something along the way...

Edward nods slowly, affected by Carter's clarity.

CUT TO:

EDWARD AND CARTER SCREAMING INTO THE WIND.

Their heads protrude through the sunroof of a Land Rover as they make their way past animals and beautiful vistas.

OVER THE SHOTS (49, 49A, 49B, 49C) of these vistas, we hear:

CARTER (V.O.)
I was very pleased when Edward conceded in our argument over item #9 on his list: 'Hunt the Big Cat.' Of course he did insist on discharging a few rounds from the big gun.

Carter leans casually against the Land Rover. In the f.g., Edward pointing his rifle in the air, FIRES off a SHOT. The recoil sends him sprawling to the ground.

CARTER (V.O.)
One proved to be enough.
The sun is setting on this beautiful spot on the plains. Tents have been set up near a grove of trees.

CARTER (V.O.)
Chamberlain or Russell?

EDWARD (V.O.)
Chamberlain.

CARTER (V.O.)
Please.

Edward and Carter are playing gin.

EDWARD
Wilt Chamberlain scored one hundred points in one game and averaged over fifty points for an entire season.

CARTER
Bill Russell won eleven NBA championships.

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
Chamberlain got 55 rebounds in one game. Against Russell.

CARTER
Eleven championships.

EDWARD
Chamberlain led the league in scoring seven years in a row. He led the league in rebounding eleven times. He even led the league in assists one year. Just 'cause he wanted to.

CARTER
Watch my lips... Eleven championships.

EDWARD
Wilt Chamberlain slept with twenty thousand women. And he did it without Bob Cousy, K.C. Jones, or John Havlicek.

CARTER
(lays down his cards)
Two.

Edward throws his cards down on the table in disgust.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE GREAT PYRAMID OF KHUFU - DUSK

Bathed in the glow of the evening sun, Edward and Carter arrive at the top of the pyramid and sit down on a stone. They take in the endless expanse of desert below.

CARTER
Did you know the only dog ever to be struck by lightning was here in Egypt?

EDWARD
I wish I had met you before we were dead.

Edward takes the list out. He crosses off "SEE THE PYRAMIDS."

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD

Technically we can cross off two items. See the pyramids and witness something majestic. This is about as majestic as it gets.

(CONTINUED)
Carter
Wait till you see my mountain.

Edward
Right, your mountain. Still, this ain't half bad.
After a beat...

CARTER
The ancient Egyptians had a beautiful belief about death. When their souls reached the entrance to heaven, the gods would ask them two questions. Their answers determined if they were admitted or not.
EDWARD
All right, I'll bite... What were they?

CARTER
Have you found joy in your life?

EDWARD
Mmmhmm.

CARTER
Answer the question.

EDWARD
Me, um... answer have I found joy in my life?
(thinks for several moments)
Yes.

CARTER
Has your life brought joy to others?

EDWARD
Oh, this type of question. I don't know. I don't think about how other people gauge... Ask them.

CARTER
I'm asking you.

He walks several paces away, hands in his pockets. Moments pass... A long, difficult exhale... takes a conflicted breath...

EDWARD
Fine. Let me put it to you this way. After the break-up, and the ensuing fleecing of the dad, Emily went to live with her mother. You know, you try to stay close, but it gets down to holidays, phone calls, birthday cards. Anyway, she goes to college, she joins one of her 'save the poor people,' the animals, what not. Meets a guy, decides she loves him, an activist. Good-looking kid.

(MORE)
EDWARD (CONT'D)
Driven. Smart. But there was
something about him. So, when she
said they were engaged I told her
I was against it. But, being my
daughter, naturally, she went
ahead and married him anyway.
Needless to say, I wasn't invited
to the wedding.

CARTER
That must have hurt.

EDWARD
You think?
(after a difficult beat)
The first time he hit her, she
came to me. I wanted to bash his
brains in... but she wouldn't let
me. Said she loved him, said it
wasn't his fault, he'd had a few
drinks. She was the one who
picked the fight... The next time
it happened, she didn't come to
me, the ex told me. Nice to hear
her voice again.

CARTER
What did you do?

EDWARD
What any father would do. I took
care of it. I called a guy who
called a guy who handles these
kinds of things. I don't know
what he said or what he did. All
I know is he didn't kill him and
my daughter never heard from him
again.

CARTER
How did Emily take it?

EDWARD
Called me names you wouldn't
believe. And, worse. Said I was
dead to her. I'm not proud of
everything I've done, but I'd do
it all again. So if they don't
let me into Egyptian heaven
because my daughter hates me, well
then, I guess that's just the way
it goes, however you answer your
two questions.
They stare out at the desert.

EDWARD
How do we get down from this tomb?

DISSOLVE TO:
CARTER (V.O.)
Gin.

EDWARD (V.O.)
God dammit. You get all the cards. I hate that.
Edward and Carter are playing cards.

EDWARD
I got ten, twenty, thirty-five.

CARTER
Plus twenty-five for gin gives me 60. Puts me out in the first two games.

EDWARD
Lucky swine.

CARTER
Defeat can be a bitter pill.

EDWARD
Just deal the cards.

Edward starts shuffling the cards.
53B CONTINUED:

After a few beats...

EDWARD
It's been a long time between
friends for me, Carter.

CARTER
(taking this in)
You're still on the schneid in the
third game.

EDWARD
Deal the cards.

CUT TO:

54 OMITTED

55 EXT. NEW DELHI, INDIA - DAY

The city unfolds in a labyrinth of new and old buildings
huddled together between the twisting streets.

CUT TO:

55A EXT. NEW DELHI STREET (INDIA) - DAY

Edward and Carter stroll down a crowded street lined with
outdoor stands.

CARTER
In 1931, the British built New
Delhi as their new capital, which
they relocated from Calcutta.
Originally designed to accommodate
70,000 people, in just 66 years
the population has grown to over 8
million.

Seemingly, out of nowhere, a horde of STREET URCHINS
looking for handouts surrounds them. Without breaking
stride, Edward reaches into his pocket, removes a fistful
of bills, and tosses them to the Urchins who scramble to
retrieve them.

EDWARD
Some historians say the first
bathroom was constructed here in
India.

Edward and Carter move on only to be re-surrounded by the
Urchins.
56  EXT. TAJ MAHAL - DAY  

ESTABLISHING. 

  CARTER (V.O.)
  The empress was the wife of Shah Jehan, the fifth mughal emperor.

57  INT. TAJ MAHAL GALLERY - DAY  

Carter and Edward walk past two ornate sarcophagi.

  CARTER
  Even though it was an arranged marriage, they were deeply in love and inseparable until she died giving birth to their fourteenth child.

  EDWARD
  Do you mind if I call you Ray? My main man Ray.

  CARTER
  Are you listening to anything I'm saying?

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
Absolutely. Fourteen kids. I'm with you.

CARTER
It took twenty-thousand volunteers twenty-two years to complete the structure. Every square foot designed by the Shah himself.

EDWARD
So that's true love.

CARTER
Yeah. True love.

EDWARD
Must be nice.

Carter realizes that Edward is looking at him...

Carter returns the look, absorbing Edward's implication, before staring back up at the tombs.

EDWARD
I don't know if I buy the whole twenty thousand volunteers business.

EXT. TAJ MAHAL - DAY

Edward and Carter walk along the promenade beside the reflecting pools.

EDWARD
Funeral plans tend to confuse me. Specifically... buried or cremated? Take buried. Now, I know it shouldn't matter, but I'm claustrophobic. And what if I wake up underground and nobody can hear me? Do they still make those coffins with the bells?

CARTER
I don't believe they do.

EDWARD
All right, cremated. What do you do with the ashes? Do you bury 'em, scatter 'em, put 'em on a shelf, float 'em down the Ganges on a bed of flowers?

(MORE)
And what if I feel the flames?

CARTER
I definitely want myself cremated.

EDWARD
Maybe we should go frozen like Walt Disney.

CARTER
No, cremated, ashes put in a can and buried somewhere with a view.

EDWARD
A can?

CARTER
Never liked the sound of the word, 'Urn.'

EDWARD
Really? You got any special feelings about crypt?

CARTER
An old Chock Full O' Nuts can do me just fine.

EDWARD
Chock Full O' Nuts? The 'heavenly' coffee?

CARTER
Better coffee even your money can't buy.

EDWARD
I wouldn't bet on that.

CARTER
Ah, yes, Kopi Luwak.

EDWARD
What do you got against Kopi Luwak?

CARTER
Too fancy for my taste.

EDWARD
Oh yeah, too fancy for my main man Ray.

DISSOLVE TO:
59 EXT. THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA - DAY

Seen from a distance as it looms across the hilltops.

A SOUND is heard in the far off distance. We can't quite make it out, but it clearly doesn't belong. As the SOUND comes close, we hear VOICES SINGING.

SINGING VOICES (O.S.)
'Jeremiah was a bullfrog.
Was a good friend of mine.
I never understood a single word
he said...
But I helped him'a drink his wine.'

And suddenly a MOTORCYCLE bursts INTO VIEW up the hillside. Edward clings to Carter's back as they ride along the center of the wall, ROARING BY us.

SINGING VOICES (O.S.)
'Joy to the world.
All the boys and girls...'

... then disappearing down the opposite hillside in a cloud of dust.

SINGING VOICES (O.S.)
'Joy to the fishes in the deep blue sea.
Joy to you and me.
If I was the king of the world...'

CUT TO:

THE FAR-OFF SUN

SETTING AT THE EDGE OF AN ENORMOUS PLAIN.

60 EXT. GREAT WALL OF CHINA HILLTOP FORTRESS - DUSK

As the two dusty men watch the sun's dying embers.

CARTER
You know the wall was actually built in several sections, until Emperor Qin Shihuang joined them together to fend off invasions from the Mongolian Huns.

EDWARD
Did it work?
CARTER
Ever heard of The Great Wall of Mongolia?

EDWARD
You got more shit stored up in that attic of yours. How does a guy who works in a garage get to know so much?

CARTER
What you're really asking is how does someone 'knows so much end up working in a garage.

EDWARD
Okay. I'm asking.

CARTER
'Course I wanted more.

EDWARD
So?

CARTER
So, life... A pipe bursts, a roof leaks, someone needs braces, before you know it, two bedrooms just aren't enough. You do what it takes to protect your family.

EDWARD
(after a beat)
I was watching one of those archaeology deals they got on the BBC about how even the most primitive villages had walls built around 'em?

CARTER
(of course he knows)
Is that right?

EDWARD
The irony is that by the time they discover these places, the walls are the only thing left standing... all the things they were built to protect are long gone.

CARTER
Except here.

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
Ah so the enigmatic Chinese perspective.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:  (2)

WIDE SHOT

As the two men stand atop the wall, alone on the other side of the world, as the sun vanishes from sight.

CUT TO:

EXT. TIBETAN TEMPLE - DAY

Edward and Carter are in the doorway of the temple which is at the base of the Himalayas. They are looking out at a cloud-enshrouded mountain. Thomas is in the b.g. on his cell.

CARTER

Probably be a lot more majestic if I could see it.

Edward's attention is elsewhere. He's looking at an old Tibetan woman praying at a Buddhist altar.

EDWARD

See that old woman? Odds are we're gonna be dead before her.

CARTER

Happy thought.

EDWARD

'Course she's probably got reincarnation going for her, however that system works.

CARTER

Buddhists believe you keep coming back, moving up or down a level, based on how you've led your life, until eventually you reach Nirvana.

EDWARD

Some of these sects, Hindus and so forth, believe if you really screw up, you can come back as an animal or a bug, right?

CARTER

That's what I hear.

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
See, that's where they lose me. Once that happens, how do you get back in the ball game? I mean, what does a snail have to do to move up in the lineup? Lay down the perfect trail of slime?

Thomas walks up.

THOMAS
So, shitty news or really shitty news?

EDWARD
A. The first one.

THOMAS
There's a storm up there.

EDWARD
Thanks for the bulletin. You can't see the thing.

THOMAS
They won't fly us up until the weather clears.

CARTER
When do they expect it to clear?

THOMAS
Next spring sometime. That's B. The really shitty news, in case you were wondering.

EDWARD
Sorry, Carter.

CARTER
Yeah, well, maybe next trip.

He knows it will never happen.

EDWARD
Yeah, next spring.

Carter stares at the mountain for a beat.

CARTER
Now what?

EDWARD
Maybe your mountain's trying to tell us something.

(CONTINUED)
CARTER
What are you talking about?

EDWARD
Maybe we've been gone long enough.

CARTER
Long enough for whom?

Edward gives a palms up shrug as if to say, "Do you need to ask?"

CARTER
Oh, I see. The mountain's not telling us to go home. The mountain's telling you to tell me to go home. How about you worry about your own damn life and let me worry about mine.

EDWARD
Okay, okay... you don't have to get chippie with me.

CARTER
What the hell is chippie? What's next?

EDWARD
Hong Kong, silk suits, and black walnut ice cream.

CARTER
Well, then let's get to Hong Kong.

CUT TO:

61A EXT. HONG KONG - ESTABLISHING SHOT

62 INT. INTERCONTINENTAL LOBBY LOUNGE - NIGHT

THE LIGHTS AND LOOMING TOWERS OF HONG KONG, breathtaking through the glass walls of the hotel lobby which bustles with international travelers from around the globe.

Carter sits alone at the bar, talking to the BARTENDER over a glass of Scotch...

CARTER
The Tibetans call it Chomulungma, 'Goddess Mother of the Snows.'

(CONTINUED)
WOMAN (O.S.)  
'Goddess Mother of the World,'  
actually.

A WOMAN takes a seat one seat away from him. She's 40, black, and dressed in a tailored business suit.

WOMAN  
In the traditional Tibetan translation.  

(CONTINUED)
CARTER
(to the Woman)
I stand corrected.

WOMAN
(to the bartender)
Pinot Noir, please.
(to Carter)
I take it you've been there?

CARTER
(shakes his head)
Just left. Tried to make it up there, but the weather --

WOMAN
You're a little late in the season.

CARTER
So they tell me. My name's Carter.

WOMAN
(shaking his hand)
Angelica... I'm sorry if this sounds terrible, but aren't you a little developed in years to be running up giant mountains?

CARTER
(laughs)
Developed. That's certainly one way of putting it.

She turns slightly towards him and smiles as if to say the question still stands...

WOMAN
(deadpan)
So what's the attraction?

CARTER
Excuse me?

WOMAN
Why the sudden urge to see it?

CARTER
They asked Hillary that. He was the first man to --

*(CONTINUED)*
WOMAN
Reach the summit in fifty-three,
yes, I know.

Carter smiles in surprise. She blushes demurely.

WOMAN
Forgive me... What did Hillary say?

CARTER
He said that 'People do not decide
to become extraordinary. They
decide to accomplish extraordinary
things.'

WOMAN
And does that describe you?

CARTER
Lord, no. I'm about as far from
extraordinary as a man can be.

WOMAN
Oh, I doubt that very much...

Now it's Carter's turn to blush.

CARTER
We weren't gonna climb it. We
were just going to take a
helicopter ride.

WOMAN
I've been there, you know? Made
it up to twenty-six thousand feet
before we had to turn back.

CARTER
What was it like?

WOMAN
Cold, mostly. During the day, the
sky is more black than blue.
There's not enough air to reflect
the sunlight... But at night,
you've never seen so many stars...
seems like they're just out of
arm's reach. And so bright.
They're like holes in the floor of
heaven.

CARTER
Did you hear it?

(CONTINUED)
WOMAN
Hear what?

CARTER
I read an account of one man who made it all the way to the summit. Standing alone at the top of the world, he described this profound silence. All sound just fell away. And that's when he heard it.

WOMAN
What?

CARTER
The sound of the mountain.

She is taken in by him.

CARTER
He said it sounded like the voice of God.

Their eyes lock. He looks shyly down at his drink, swirling the ice...

WOMAN
Did you know that of all cities, Hong Kong has the fifth highest concentration of human life?

CARTER
I didn't.

WOMAN
It's true... You wouldn't think it can feel like the loneliest place on earth.

He stops swirling his glass and looks up at her...

WOMAN
I've never done this before. God, that sounds like such a cliche. I have a room upstairs.

Carter just stares until she lays her hand over his, a breath of suggestion on her lips...

CARTER
Thank you. It's not you, it's just that I'm...

(continuing)
The Woman nods, accepting the rejection without a hint of self-consciousness.

WOMAN
She's a very lucky woman.

CARTER
(after a beat)
I'd rather believe I'm the lucky one.

WOMAN
Good for you.

She squeezes his hand gently then walks alone towards the elevators...

INT. INTERCONTINENTAL SUITE - NIGHT
Edward enters from another part of the suite. Thomas is working his BlackBerry.

EDWARD
Tommy, three things to remember for when you get older: Never pass up a bathroom. Never waste a hard-on. And never trust a fart.

Thomas just stares at him. Then...

THOMAS
I'll keep that in mind as I approach decrepitude.

The SOUND of the DOOR to the suite opening. It's Carter.

CARTER
Let's go home.

Edward looks up at him.

EDWARD
Excuse me?

CARTER
I'd like to go home now.

EDWARD
What about the silk suits?

(CONTINUED)
CARTER
That was very clever of you, Edward.

Edward gives him a "What are you talking about look?"

Carter pats him knowingly on the shoulder and walks toward his room, then stops and turns back.

CARTER
How did you know I wouldn't go through with it?

EDWARD
I didn't.

Carter nods in understanding and heads off. Edward looks over to see Thomas watching him.

THOMAS
I'm proud of you.

EDWARD
Nobody cares what you think.

DISSOLVE TO:

63A LOS ANGELES SKYLINE SEEN FROM ABOVE

64 INT. GULFSTREAM PRIVATE JET - NIGHT

As Carter stares with anticipation down at the city through the window. PAN ACROSS the aisle TO Edward, his brow furrowed, lost in thought.

CUT TO:

65 INT. EDWARD'S LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Driving through the suburbs of Los Angeles. Edward and Carter sit side-by-side in the back. Thomas is up front with the driver.

(CONTINUED)
Edward

Traffic lights and stop signs make traffic. You want to save energy, seventy percent of...

(looking around)
Hey, Tommy, this isn't the way to Crenshaw.

Thomas shares a nervously conspiratorial look with Carter.

Thomas
There's an accident on the Ten. We're taking the surface streets.

EXT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

As the car pulls up in front of a simple, single-level ranch house.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Edward

Why are we -- Thomas, what the hell --

Stops as he sees something through the window. It's a woman in her mid-30s. She's standing in the window of the ranch house, pacing back and forth as she talks on the phone.

Carter

He kept tabs on her in case you ever wanted to --

Edward

(livid)
This was his idea?

Carter

No, it was mine. Took half the flight back to talk him into it.

Edward opens the door and climbs out of the car and walks briskly away from the house. Carter watches him go for a beat, then goes after him.

EXT. SUBURB STREET - NIGHT

Carter

Hey...

(as Edward ignores him)
Edward... Edward! What are you so afraid of?

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
(stops)
Just because I told you my story
doesn't invite you to be a part of
it.

CARTER
Oh? Like the woman at the bar?

EDWARD
That's different.

CARTER
Tell me how's it different?

EDWARD
Because it is.

CARTER
How's it different?

EDWARD
(erupting)
You have no fuckin' idea who I am.
I built a billion-dollar business
out of nothing. Presidents seek
my advice, I've dined with goddamn
royalty and you want to make out
like this one trip was supposed to
mean something to me. Like it was
gonna change me. How did you see
it playing out, Carter? I knock
on the door. She answers. She's
surprised and angry, but I tell
her how much I love her and missed
her. And oh, by the way, I'm
going to be dead soon and I'm only
reaching out to you, darling,
because I'm scared to die alone?

CARTER
Everyone's scared to die alone.

EDWARD
(explodes)
I'm not everyone.

He pulls out the list and tears it in half.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:  (2)

EDWARD
This was supposed to be fun.
(tears it again, and again)
That's all it ever was.

He walks off leaving Carter to watch the pieces of The Bucket List scatter...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CARTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A taxi pulls up in front of Carter's house. Carter gets out and walks up to the front door. He goes to turn the doorknob then stops... After a moment, he RINGS the DOORBELL and waits...

Several moments pass before Virginia opens the door... They take each other in for several beats before she steps aside and nods for him to come in. He follows her inside and closes the door behind him.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

EDWARD walks into an expansive, empty living room.

INT. DINING ROOM - DUSK

CARTER sits at the Sunday dinner table with his family. Virginia is saying grace. He watches her for a moment, smiles, then bows his head and continues to pray...

INT. EDWARD'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The copper coffee siphon sits on a counter. Edward opens the box of Kopi Luwak. It's empty. He goes to the refrigerator and finds a container of leftovers. He struggles to open the container. After a few unsuccessful attempts, he starts pounding on it.

EXT. CRENSHAW - LATE AFTERNOON

Carter and Virginia walk along the tree-lined street. After a few steps, Carter takes her hand, and they continue to walk.
Edward in the f.g. is fixing drinks at a bar. Behind him on the couch sit two attractive 25-year-olds in sexy outfits. After a beat, Edward puts the bottle down, leans on the bar, and starts sobbing. The two girls are nonplussed. They look at each other: "What do we do?"

Carter walks up behind Virginia. He lays his hands on her hips and slowly turns her towards him. He places her hands in a dance pose and slowly begins to move his feet.

Rachel enters from the kitchen and stops short as she sees her parents gliding across the room. She smiles, then exits.

Carter and Virginia continue to dance. After a few beats, Carter pulls slightly away and looks at her.

CARTER

Virginia...

VIRGINIA

You don't have to say it.

CARTER

I do. I'm sorry.

(a beat)

A man much smarter than me once said, 'Sometimes you have to go a long distance out of your way to come back a short distance correctly.' I blamed you. And you didn't deserve that. I blamed you because I thought my life wasn't what I thought it should be. I had an extraordinary life. You gave me that.

VIRGINIA

Carter, there's nobody smarter than you.

They look into each other's eyes and start to kiss. After a few beats, they break. She takes his hand and leads him into the bedroom.

They kiss again, more passionately until she pulls away.

(Continued)
VIRGINIA
I got something for us. Wasn't sure I'd need it.

CARTER
Hurry back.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She goes into the bathroom and closes the door halfway.

Carter looks around the room, trying to figure out what he should do. He goes to the bed and sits on the edge for an awkward beat. Then he gets up and moves to a chair.

   VIRGINIA (O.S.)
   Do you have any idea how long it's been?

   CARTER
   Do I want to know?

   VIRGINIA (O.S.)
   Longer than that.

Carter makes several attempts to affect a casual pose. When that seems wrong, he moves back to bed, lies back, unbuttons his top two buttons. After a beat, he rebuttons the lower one and starts to get off the bed.

   CARTER
   I feel like a teenager. Like our first time.

   VIRGINIA (O.S.)
   If we were teenagers, we wouldn't have made it out of the living room.

INT. CHAMBERS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION - NIGHT

Virginia's hair is down and spilling over her shoulders and a thin, satin negligee.

   VIRGINIA
   I remember our first time. There was no tiptoeing around.

She comes out of the bathroom.

   VIRGINIA
   You were on me like this.

She slams her hands together in front of her face. She then notices the room is empty.

   VIRGINIA
   Carter?

She moves around the bed and discovers Carter face down on the floor, his hands twitching.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VIRGINIA

Carter!

She turns him over to see his eyes are rolled back into his head as the seizure storms through him.

CUT TO:

INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

Edward sits at the head of the burnished conference table, surrounded by his team of EXECUTIVES. He seems distracted.

RICHARD

... resulted in a fifteen percent increase in cash assets following the sale of the recovery care Center to Phillips Medical.

Edward is off somewhere.

RICHARD

Mr. Cole?

EDWARD

You ever read The Divine Comedy?

The suits exchange looks.

RICHARD

Excuse me, sir?

EDWARD

The Divine Comedy, Dante Alighieri's journey into hell.

EXECUTIVE #1

Maybe we should take a break.

More looks...

EDWARD

We don't need a break. I'm in remission. I'm a goddamn medical miracle. I'm simply asking if you've ever read The Divine Comedy.

Thomas enters. He has a solemn look on his face.

THOMAS

Sir, you have a call.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

EDWARD
Not now.

THOMAS
I think you need to take this.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Edward emerges from the elevator and walks pointedly towards his old room. Passes Hollins at the nurses' station.

EDWARD
What's the prognosis?

DR. HOLLINS
It's metastasized to his brain.

EDWARD
Operable?

DR. HOLLINS
Day after tomorrow.

EDWARD
Why the delay?

DR. HOLLINS
In his condition it's not -- The odds aren't what we'd like them to be.

EDWARD
Odds, Jesus...

Edward sees there's little hope. Resumes walking into --

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Where Carter is back in bed, an IV attached to his catheter. Virginia sits by the bed.

EDWARD
How's he doing?

VIRGINIA
He's doing okay.

EDWARD
How you doing?

(CONTINUED)
VIRGINIA
We're doing fine. He wanted me to
give you this.

She pulls a letter out of her purse.

VIRGINIA
I was supposed to wait until...
But then I thought --

CARTER (O.S.)
... she's never listened to me before.

His voice is weak and his eyes are slits but he smiles
nonetheless...

CARTER
Why change a winning formula.

Edward sits down on the side of his bed.

EDWARD
You look like shit, Ray.

CARTER
Thanks.

EDWARD
How they treating you?

CARTER
Pea soup still sucks.

EDWARD
I'll have a word with the owner.

CARTER
You do that.

EDWARD
Is there anything I can do for
you?

CARTER
No, I don't think so.

EDWARD
I just wish I, uh... I'll be right
back.
    (to Virginia)
Don't let him go anywhere.

Edward runs out.
VIRGINIA
Is he out of his mind?

CARTER
Depends.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Hollins is at the nurses' station, going over paperwork. Edward approaches, speaking on his cell phone.

EDWARD
(into phone)
Tommy, it's gotta be today tell 'em... Then get him on the phone and call me back. We can do this. You can do this.

He snaps the phone shut and turns at Hollins.

EDWARD
Can he be moved?

DR. HOLLINS
Moved? I don't understand. Where...

EDWARD
I want to take him out of here.

Edward walks with Hollins trailing him.

DR. HOLLINS
Oh, I couldn't allow that. We would be liable. I would be liable --

Edward stops and confronts Hollins.

EDWARD
Bob, don't let insurance forms cloud your fine and compassionate mind. Plain English. I'm taking my friend out of here and you're coming with us. The Cole group will take full responsibility. You've got ten minutes to pack.

Hollins acquiesces.
82 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY
Edward enters.

EDWARD
How long to get him dressed, Virginia?

VIRGINIA
Why?

CARTER
I can dress him my own damn self.

EDWARD
Fine, make it snappy.

CARTER
Where we going?

VIRGINIA
You are not taking this man away from me again on one of your nutty adventures.

EDWARD
Get your coat.
   (indicates hallway)
Virginia, let me talk to you.
   (to Carter)
Get rollin'. We ain't got all day.

He ushers Virginia out into the hallway.

83 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY
Edward emerges along with Hollins, Virginia, and Carter, who is weak but follows along towards the waiting limo.

EDWARD
If you could hustle it up we're kind of on a schedule.

CARTER
I'll hustle it up when you tell me where we're going.

EDWARD
You got no sense of mystery, Ray. Virginia, get him in the car.

VIRGINIA
Who's Ray?

CUT TO:
A GOLF CART ZIPPING BETWEEN MASSIVE SOUND STAGES.

Carter sits in the back with Virginia. He's blindfolded. Edward and Dr. Hollins are also aboard.

The golf cart pulls up to a giant stage door. Virginia and Dr. Hollins help Carter out while Edward gets the door.
The doorway is curtained off with thick, sound-eating drapes. Virginia leads Carter inside.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CARTER
You're enjoying this, aren't you?

EDWARD
Having a ball.

MUFFLED CLAPPING is heard from the other side of the curtains. Thomas pushes through an opening.

THOMAS
Great. You're here. They're ready for you.

CARTER
Ready for what?

Edward takes Carter's blindfold off. He sees his whole family -- Roger, Kai, Rachel, the kids. They AD LIB hellos.

CARTER
What's going on?

THOMAS
(into a walkie-talkie)
We're all set.

CARTER
Who's he talking to?

EDWARD
You.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Our second contestant is a college professor from Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, Sashi Olpadwala.

Edward pushes Carter through the curtains.

ON CARTER
As his eyes light up as a familiar THEME PLAYS.

INT. "JEOPARDY" SOUNDSTAGE - DAY
The real deal, replete with a live studio audience.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
And finally, a mechanic from Los Angeles, California...
CARTER
(to Edward)
You son of a bitch.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Carter Chambers.

EDWARD
Have you seen Lawrence of Arabia?
No prisoners, crush 'em!

Carter straightens his tie and walks purposefully towards his podium.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. "JEOPARDY" SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

The game is underway. SASHI and DENISE, the other contestants, flank Carter who stands nervously in-between them as ALEX TREBEK reads the answers.

ALEX TREBEK
This sophistic monk is often credited as one of the causes of the Russian Revolution.

Carter hits the button but his timing is off.

SASHI
Who is Rasputin?

ALEX TREBEK
Correct.

SASHI
I'll take Mad Men for four hundred.

ALEX TREBEK
Lewis Carroll character with a predilection for tall headwear...

CARTER
The Mad Hatter.

ALEX TREBEK
No... Denise?

DENISE
Who is the Mad Hatter?

(CONTINUED)
ALEX TREBEK
Yes... Remember, Carter, your answers need to be in the form of a question.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Edward stands anxiously with Virginia.

EDWARD
Jesus, how in the world does he forget that part?

Virginia shushes him.

DENISE
Mad Men for six hundred.

ALEX TREBEK
This English King got his nickname allegedly by conversing with a tree he believed to be the King of Prussia.

CARTER
Who is King George?

ALEX TREBEK
Can you be more specific?

CARTER
Who is 'Mad' King George the Third.

ALEX TREBEK
Correct.

Virginia grabs Edward. The Chambers kids cheer.

ALEX TREBEK
Carter takes control of the board.

CARTER
I'll take World Leaders for two-hundred, Alex.

A SERIES OF CUTS

As Carter begins to run the board.

CARTER
(series)
Who is Boutros Boutros-Ghali?
What is a semi-colon? What is NORAD? Who is Pikachu? Who is Pervez Musharraf? What is firewire?

SHOTS OF:

Carter's thumb mashing the "button";
Questions coming off the "Jeopardy" game board;
Alex Trebek saying "Yes. Correct. That's right."
The other contestants are frustrated;
Roger, Lee and Rachel continue to cheer Carter on.
Virginia is so excited she starts punching Edward's arm.
Edward, realizing the punching is not going to stop,
pulls Thomas next to Virginia. Thomas then dutifully
becomes the recipient of Virginia's blows.

VIRGINIA
(as Carter gets
another answer)
Go on, baby!

CARTER
What is a Slinky? Who is Zeppo
Marx? What is Ichthyology? What
is the Tennessee Valley Authority?

Carter looks over at his family and winks as the audience
applauds...

CUT TO:

INT. "JEOPARDY" SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

The game is down to Final Jeopardy. The scoreboards show
that Carter is about ten thousand ahead of the other two,
though he appears fatigued. The final category is on the
board:

ALEX TREBEK
The category is Great Minds of the
Twentieth Century and the final
answer is --

The answer is revealed... Carter squints to read it.
Sweat blinks into his eyes as he struggles to keep it in
focus.

ALEX TREBEK
(reading)
In 1943, the U.S. Supreme Court
credited this immigrant, not
Marconi, as the inventor of radio.

Edward scrutinizes Carter as the FINAL JEOPARDY THEME
PLAYS. Carter's eyes are closed. His expression is
unreadable until the smallest hint of a smile appears at
the corners of his mouth.

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD

The kid's got it.

His grin begins to subside as he watches Carter wipe a band of sweat from his forehead.

CARTER'S POV

is BLURRED. He closes his eyes to steady himself, but his vision is BLURRED EVEN FURTHER.

BACK TO SCENE

VIRGINIA

Edward.

EDWARD

I see it.

He starts circling the stage, crossing behind the cameras to get closer to the contestants.

Carter scribbles loosely on the screen but drops the pen and falls just as Edward and Hollins arrive to catch him.

FADE TO WHITE.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Carter's head is shaved and heavily marked with surgical markers.

CARTER

Can I get some water?

VIRGINIA

You can't drink water now, sweetie. I'll get some ice chips.

Virginia goes to look for ice chips.

EDWARD

New look. Takes years off your life. No pun intended.

CARTER

Hand me my bag.

(CONTINUED)
Edward hands Carter his overnight bag. Carter reaches inside and pulls out a folded Internet printout.

CARTER
You still drinking that fancy coffee?

EDWARD
What?

Carter hands the paper to Edward.

CARTER
Been carrying this around in case I ever saw you again. Read.

EDWARD
(reading)
'Kopi Luwak is the world's most expensive coffee, though, for some, it falls under the category of too good to be true. In the Sumatran village where the beans are grown lives a breed of wild African tree-cat. These cats eat the beans, digest them, then defecate. The villagers then collect and process the stools. It is the combination of beans and gastric juices of the tree-cat that give Kopi Luwak its unique flavor and aroma.' You're shitting me?

CARTER
Cats beat me to it.

Carter bursts into weak laughter. Edward stares for a moment then starts to chuckle to himself.

EDWARD
Mean old main man Ray. Lying in the weeds, then, woof, bites me right in the ass.

Soon both men are laughing until tears trickle from their eyes.

CARTER
You got a pen?

EDWARD
What?

(CONTINUED)
CARTER
I need a pen.

Edward reaches into his pocket and hands Carter a pen. Carter reaches into his bag and pulls out the taped-together Bucket List. Carter runs a finger down the items, until he reaches "LAUGH UNTIL I CRY." Shakily, he crosses it off the list.

CARTER
(handing Edward the list)
Here. It isn't finished.

EDWARD
It's not a one-man deal.

CARTER
It's gonna have to be.

Virginia re-enters.

VIRGINIA
Here you go, babe.

CARTER
Thanks.

CUT TO:

90  EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Edward emerges through the sliding doors, unsure of where to go.

The limo pulls into the driveway. He walks slowly towards it.

DISSOLVE TO:
The surgeon enters, scrubbed for surgery, with several nurses.

DOCTOR

We're ready.
CONTINUED:
Carter reaches out for Virginia's hand and presses it to his heart.

VIRGINIA
I'll be here when you get back.

CARTER
Sounds good to me.

Her hand slips out of his as he's wheeled out of the room.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT
Edward, lost in thought, stares out the window.

He glances down at the envelope in his lap and turns it over. On the front is his name and address. He thinks a moment, steeling himself before he opens it and starts to read.

CARTER (V.O.)
'Dear Edward: I've gone back and forth the last few days, trying to decide whether or not I should even write this.'

INT. OPERATING THEATER - NIGHT
Carter lies unconscious with a tube in his mouth as the surgeons do their work. In contrast to Edward, he looks completely at peace.

CARTER (V.O.)
'In the end, I realized I would regret it if I didn't, so here goes.'

INT. WAITING ROOM - NIGHT
Roger, Lee and Rachel with their mother, clinging to her as she prays.

CARTER (V.O.)
'I know the last time we saw each other, we weren't exactly hitting the sweetest notes.'
As Edward walks up the path to his daughter's house.

He knocks on the door without hesitation.

CARTER (V.O.)
'It certainly wasn't the way I wanted the trip to end.'

The door opens revealing Emily. She's surprised and her sleepy features harden instantly. Edward begins to talk.

CARTER (V.O.)
'I suppose I'm responsible, and for that I'm sorry. But, in all honesty, if I had the chance, I'd do it again.'

Virginia pours a packet of instant coffee into a Styrofoam cup, then fills it with hot water. She looks up as Hollins appears at the other end of the hallway walking towards her. His face is unreadable.

CARTER (V.O.)
'Virginia said I left a stranger and came back a husband. I owe that to you.'

Watching through the window as Edward and Emily speak. Her guard is still up, but she's listening...

CARTER (V.O.)
'There's no way I can repay you for all you've done for me. So rather than try, I'm just going to ask you to do something else for me: Find the joy in your life.'

We can't see Hollins' face or what he's saying as he reaches Virginia, but her expression says it all. The coffee cup slips from her hands and lands at her feet spilling onto the floor.

CARTER (V.O.)
'You once said you're not everyone. Well, that's true. You're certainly not everyone. But everyone is everyone.'
Edward shakes Emily's hand goodbye. She's not giving in, but it's a start. He reaches for the front door just as a LITTLE GIRL (4), still half-asleep, comes out from the back bedroom. Edward is stunned.

CARTER (V.O.)
'My pastor always says, "Our lives are streams flowing into the same river towards whatever heaven lies in the mist beyond the falls." Find the joy in your life, Edward."

He looks up at Emily who says something to the little girl. He crouches down as the girl walks right up to him and sleepily lays her head on his shoulder.

Edward's eyes are full as he looks up at Emily in amazement then slowly kisses the curls on his granddaughter's head.

Carter's face is at peace. Virginia's face comes INTO FRAME and kisses him softly. Her tears fall onto his eyelids and continue down his cheeks.

CARTER (V.O.)
My dear friend, 'Close your eyes and let the waters take you.'

Edward sits inside his car. He pulls the list out of his pocket. With the red pen he crosses out: "KISS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD." He looks back to the house. His granddaughter is standing in the window. She waves. He waves back.

EDWARD (V.O.)
Good afternoon. My name is Edward Cole.

CUT TO:

Edward stands at the podium.
During the following, the CAMERA TRACKS until we're BEHIND Edward revealing his audience of SEVERAL HUNDRED MOURNERS filling every last inch of the row.

(CONTINUED)
EDWARD
I don't know what most people say at these occasions, because in all honesty, I've tried to avoid them. The simplest thing is I loved him and I miss him.

His eyes move from the family to Thomas who stands against the wall with Emily and her daughter.

EDWARD
(taking out the Bucket List)
Carter and I saw the world together. Which is amazing when you think that only three months ago we were strangers. I hope it doesn't sound selfish of me, but the last months of his life were the best months of mine. He saved my life, and he knew it before I did.

With the pen, he crosses out: "HELP A COMPLETE STRANGER FOR THE GOOD."

Beneath it, the last remaining task lies unfulfilled: "WITNESS SOMETHING TRULY MAJESTIC."

Slowly, the words on the page --

DISSOLVE TO:

As the climber from the opening scene finally arrives at the peak.

EDWARD (V.O.)
I'm deeply proud that this man found it worth his while to know me. In the end, I think it's safe to say we brought joy to one another.

His hands lift to his face, removing the oxygen mask and hood revealing THOMAS.

EDWARD (V.O.)
And one day when I go to some final resting place and if I happen to wake up next to a certain wall with a gate...

Thomas walks over to a flat stone and lifts it onto its side, exposing a hole underneath.

(CONTINUED)
Carefully, Thomas lifts A FROZEN CHOCK FULL O' NUTS can from its resting place in the hole beneath the stone.

He smiles as if greeting an old friend. He brushes off some frost, then sets the can on the snow.

**EDWARD (V.O.)**
I hope that Carter is there to vouch for me and show me the ropes on the other side.

Thomas reaches into his backpack and removes a SECOND CHOCK FULL O' NUTS CAN wrapped in plastic.

**CARTER (V.O.)**
Edward Perriman Cole died in May. It was a Sunday, in the afternoon, and there wasn't a cloud in the sky...

Thomas unwraps the plastic, then places the second can on the ground next to the first.

**CARTER (V.O.)**
He was eighty-one years old.

Finally, Thomas deposits both cans into the hole.

**CARTER (V.O.)**
Even now, I can't claim to understand the measure of a life, but I can tell you this...

Atop the can he lays the nearly completed Bucket List. All of the items have been crossed off, save for one: 'WITNESS SOMETHING TRULY MAJESTIC.'

**CARTER (V.O.)**
I know that when he died his eyes were closed, and his heart was open...

He crosses it off with Edward's red pen, places the worn list on top of the cans, then replaces the rock over the cans.

**CARTER (V.O.)**
I know that he could hear the mountain...

**ALT. CARTER (V.O.)**
Now I don't know if Edward heard the mountain, and I don't know if the mountain heard him in return.

THE CAMERA LINGERS ON the rock for a moment then TILTS UP to reveal the infinite view of the entire world spread out below.

(CONTINUED)
CARTER (V.O.)
And I know the mountain
heard him in return.

ALT. CARTER (V.O.)
But he was buried in the
mountain. And I know that
made him happy. Because it
was against the law.

FADE OUT.

THE END