

CAST AWAY

by

William Broyles

THIRD DRAFT

March 13, 1998

FADE IN:

EXT. MARFA, TEXAS - 1993 - WIDE - DAY

The Texas plains, horizon to horizon, nothing but the browns and ochres of earth and the blue and violet of the sky. The sheer scope of it sinks in: the blank slate of nature, the absence of man. On the screen superimpose:

MARFA, TEXAS, 1993.

CREDITS BEGIN.

A plume of dust comes into frame. The dust is from a TRUCK, orange and white and violet, with "FedEx" blazoned across the

side.

The truck turns into a collection of ramshackle World War II era Quonset huts and outbuildings. Around the outbuildings are large sculptures of wood and metal.

EXT. QUONSET HUT - DAY

The door is opened by a WOMAN in her late twenties. Hair pulled back, casual, an artist. She hands the DRIVER a FedEx BOX which is decorated with a drawing of two ANGEL WINGS. The Driver has a hand-held computer; a portable printer dangles from his belt.

The Driver scans the package with his hand-held computer, prints out a label and sticks it on the Box, ready to go. But something on the box catches her eye. She wants it back. He glances at his watch. She draws RINGS around the Wings, uniting them. She gives the box to the Driver, then hands him a cup of coffee. They've done this before.

He takes a sip of the coffee, then runs for the truck. He jumps in and heads back onto the plains.

EXT. FEDEX OFFICE - MIDLAND/ODESSA - NIGHT - HOURS LATER

The Driver jams the distinctive Angel Wing Box on top of a dolly and loads it into a CONTAINER with clear plastic sides. A female Loader slaps a large bar code label on the container, scans it, then pulls the container across a belt of rollers onto a larger truck. The doors of the truck close. The latch slams down.

A forklift hoists the container to the cargo doors of a 737.

EXT. MEMPHIS AIRPORT SUPERHUB - NIGHT

The 737 lands.

EXT. SUPERHUB - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

One of a seemingly endless line of FedEx planes, our 737 taxis to a gate at the FedEx SUPERHUB. The Hub is a vast living organism -- loud, complex, overwhelming, as much a symbol of modern life as was the factory in Modern Times.

Five thousand people work in a frenzy of interconnected activity inside three vast hangers brightly lit. Hundreds of forklifts and cargo-pullers dart about, their headlights crisscrossing like a laser show.

Loaders quickly roll the container onto a FORKLIFT.

INT. MEMPHIS SUPERHUB - NIGHT

The forklift speeds inside one of the hangers to a LOADING BELT, where our Box is spilled into a Mississippi River of packages, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of them, all shapes and sizes, from shoe boxes to engine blocks. Large mechanical arms divert the immense flow of Workers at dozens of stations. The packages surge and move.

The Workers place the packages label-side-up on new belts, where they're scanned by laser readers. Picking up speed our Box is shunted across the acres of interlocking belts.

The Box ends up in a much larger CONTAINER labeled CDG.

EXT. MEMPHIS SUPERHUB - NIGHT

A forklift lifts the Container to a door on a giant MD-11.

INT. GLOBAL OPERATIONS CENTER - NIGHT

A jumbled room jammed with computers and dominated by a HUGE WALL GRAPHIC that charts hundreds of airplanes. An Operator moves a yellow strip labeled Jumbo 12 across the board.

EXT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

The giant plane touches down in Paris. The Angel Wing Box moves quickly on another belt and disappears into another CONTAINER, which is loaded onto still another AIRPLANE.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG AIRPORT, RUSSIA - NIGHT

The plane lands. The container is unloaded down a belt. We see our Angel Box. Directly in front of it is a DENTED BOX.

INT. ST. PETERSBURG FEDEX OFFICE, RUSSIA

SERIES OF SHOTS

Night. The manic activity has come to a dead stop. Our two Boxes sit on a table in a corner not far from a small Christmas tree.

Daylight now. YURI, a Supervisor, saunters over, picks up the Angel Box, sees an attractive co-worker, puts it down.

Night again. A cat walks by the table where our two Boxes have come to rest.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG FEDEX OFFICE - DAY

A FedEx truck pulls out of the warehouse. The walls of the warehouse are covered with graffiti. The streets are slushy, the buildings blanketed in snow.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG - DAY

The Driver sits in the truck drinking tea. He takes a last sip, sighs, gets out with the Angel Box. Walks slowly toward an APARTMENT HOUSE.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG APARTMENT HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A beautiful young RUSSIAN WOMAN opens the door. A young AMERICAN MAN comes up behind her, signs the form and takes the Angel Box. We see Christmas decorations inside. The woman puts her arms around him as the door closes.

RUSSIAN WOMAN (O.S.)

(accented English)

It's pretty. Who is it from?

AMERICAN MAN (O.S.)

My wife.

We stay with the Driver as he ambles back toward the truck.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The Driver has just delivered the Dented Box to ALEKSEI, Russian Businessman, who closes the door of a Czarist-era building. Aleksei checks his watch, picks up the phone.

EXT. FEDEX OFFICES - MANILA - DAY

CHUCK NOLAND, early thirties, walks along a line of brightly colored jitneys, each bearing the FedEx logo. With him is a Filipino FedEx SUPERVISOR wearing a guayabera. Chuck glistens with a thin layer of sweat.

CHUCK

My guess is we're talking fuel filters here, Fernando. The gas is dirty, these jitneys get in the mountains, their engines cut out.

FERNANDO

That could lose us half an hour.

CHUCK

Easy. Each way.

His beeper goes off.

INT. FEDEX OFFICES - MANILA - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck is on the phone.

CHUCK

So it finally turned up...

Chuck hesitates for a moment, then looks at his watch.

CHUCK

I'll catch the sweep tonight.

INT. FEDEX PLANE - NIGHT

Strapped into the jump seat behind the pilots, Chuck sleeps with a mask over his eyes. On his lap are some travel brochures. We see sailboats, we see the Florida keys.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG FEDEX OFFICES - DAY

Christmas in Russia. Snow everywhere. Brightly colored lights. Chucks gets out of a Volga with Aleksei. He has a bag over his shoulder, the dented package under one arm.

INT. FEDEX OFFICES - DAY

The staff has assembled near the loading dock. Yuri the station manager stands in front, occasionally catching the eye of the attractive woman. Chuck displays the FedEx box.

CHUCK

It took this test package thirty-two hours to get from Seattle to St. Petersburg, a distance of nine thousand miles. And then it took forty-one hours to get from our warehouse in St. Petersburg to here, a distance of, what --

ALEKSEI

Six kilometers. Four miles.

CHUCK

So how are we going to get this place shaped up?

There's a muttered chorus of answers.

CHUCK

There's only one way. We have to work together. Every one of us depends on everyone else. If one package is late, we are all late. If one truck misses the deadline, we all miss the deadline. Let's start by taking a look around.

Chuck leads his team through the sorting area. Yuri squeezes right next to him, ostentatiously carrying a clipboard. Chuck stops.

CHUCK

Here, this table is too far from the wall. Packages can slip down...like...
(pulls out a package from behind a table)
...this.

He hefts the package, as if trying to guess what's inside.

CHUCK

What could be in here? Let's say one of you sent it. Could be the closing papers on your dacha, could be a toy for your grandson's birthday, could be a kidney to keep your mother alive. I don't think you want your mother's kidney to end up behind a table.

The Sorter shoves the table against the wall. Yuri says something to the Translator.

TRANSLATOR

He says they have been very busy. It is hard to get good employees. He is sure you understand.

Wrong answer: Chuck glances sharply at Yuri. Aleksei appears with a cellular phone.

ALEKSEI

Phone call. Malaysia.

Chuck takes the phone, opening his BAG as he does so.

CHUCK

Kamal? Right. I'm getting them.

He pulls out a set of blueprints and tacks them to a bulletin board as he talks.

CHUCK

I'm looking at the blueprints of K.L. right now. The belts are too small for the sorters. Yeah, sometimes you never see what's right in front of your face. Look, it's --

Chuck keeps an eye on what is going on in the warehouse. Then he notices something over by one of the trucks.

CHUCK

(to a loader)

Hold it! Hazardous material needs its own container!

(back on the phone)

-- three in the afternoon there, right? That gives you five hours until the sweep comes through. Do the sort by hand tonight, then put in a new feeder belt, say a twenty-four incher. Yes, overtime is authorized.

He hangs up the phone. He turns to the crew.

CHUCK

I'm going out on every route, I'm going to work every job here, until I know enough to help you. That's it.

The crew disperses back to work. Chuck and Aleksei walk toward the office. They've done this before. Chuck lets a corner of his command persona slip.

ALEKSEI

It's bad.

CHUCK

Worse than Warsaw.

ALEKSEI

Nobody remembers that.

CHUCK

The failures they remember. It's the successes they forget.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

A FedEx truck pulls out of the FedEx office. Chuck is inside. He notices the graffiti on the walls.

INT. TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck rides next to LEV, the driver, a serious sort. The Translator squats on some boxes between them, trying to keep his balance.

CHUCK

You sorted your packages before you left.
None of the other drivers did.

The Translator and Lev exchange a few words.

TRANSLATOR

He says he wants to be organized. Do
packages in order.

Chuck looks at Lev with respect. Right answer.

CHUCK

So how come the other drivers haven't
left yet?

The Translator asks Lev, who looks at him as if he is crazy, then snorts an answer. The Translator blushes.

TRANSLATOR

He says -- he is a very rude fellow --

CHUCK

Tell me exactly what he said.

TRANSLATOR

He says why don't his farts smell sweet?

Chuck grins. Lev shrugs and says something else.

TRANSLATOR

He says that's just the way it is.

CHUCK

Lev -- it's Lev, right? Listen, this is
FedEx. We don't have to accept the way
it is.

EXT. HOTEL - ST. PETERSBURG

A weary Chuck enters the hotel. In the sky above him we see the Northern Lights. He doesn't even look up.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Chuck is watching CNN on the television, working his PowerBook, and holding the phone.

CHUCK

No, keep trying. A circuit's bound to open up.

He hangs up.

CHUCK

(to himself)

Those damn Northern Lights.

Just then the lights go off. For a moment everything is darkness. Then a small light switches on. Chuck has a headlamp on.

He gets up, heads into the bathroom. We stay in the bedroom. After only a moment, the light reemerges. It heads over to his bag. We go with it.

Chuck takes out a roll of toilet paper. The guy is prepared for anything. He goes into the bathroom, closes the door.

The lights come back on just as the phone rings.

We hear scuffling sounds on the other side of the door. Chuck charges out, holding up his pants.

Grabs the phone.

CHUCK

Hello? Great. Try it.

He waits. We hear an ANSWERING MACHINE.

KELLY (V.O.)

This is Kelly, leave me a message and I'll call you back soon as I can.

This is not what Chuck wanted to hear.

CHUCK

Kelly, damn, look, this is Chuck. I'm going to be a little late. Well, more than a little. I had to go to Russia. Couldn't be helped. Could you call and cancel the trip? Look, we'll sail the Keys in March. It's better than anyway. I'll be back before Christmas. I promise. I think. I mean, I will. I, uh --

He's stumbling over whether to say I love you.

CHUCK

I miss you.

He gently hangs up the phone.

INT. FEDEX OFFICES - ST. PETERSBURG - SERIES OF SHOTS

A surprised Yuri stands with the attractive assistant as Chuck takes his clipboard away.

An even more surprised Lev stands by his truck as Chuck hands the clipboard to him.

Chuck and the loaders clean off the graffiti.

Working alongside the sorters as the packages come in, Chuck points out how to organize the inflow.

Chuck and Lev go over large maps of St. Petersburg with the drivers.

INT. FEDEX WAREHOUSE - ST. PETERSBURG - WEEK LATER

A big semi is being loaded with outgoing packages for the airport run. Aleksei, Chuck, Lev and the office executives watch as containers are rolled on.

LEV

We've never got all the trucks in on time. Never.

Chucks looks at the clock.

CHUCK

Only one still left?

LEV

Route six.

Aleksei points at the big semi.

ALEKSEI

If we don't send it now we may miss the connection in Paris.

The pressure in on. Chuck looks around at his team.

CHUCK

(to Aleksei)

Give it five minutes.

EXT. FEDEX OFFICES - ST. PETERSBURG - MINUTES LATER

The last truck rolls in.

INT. FEDEX OFFICES - ST. PETERSBURG

The last truck enters and loading dock. A few loaders move toward it. The executives all stand and watch. But not Chuck. He's hands on.

CHUCK

Let's go.

He heads toward the truck and begins pulling off packages. All the other executives follow him.

INT. FEDEX OFFICES - ST. PETERSBURG - MINUTES LATER

Led by Chuck, who works like a man possessed, they sort the packages.

CHUCK

That's Bermuda. Bermuda is in the Memphis thru container. No, Azores is Europe.

He gestures at a closed container.

CHUCK

The Paris container. Africa too. Japan goes to Memphis.

Chuck is everywhere, setting the example. The whole office is energized, working together.

INT. FEDEX OFFICES - ST. PETERSBURG - MINUTES LATER

They load the last container on the waiting truck. Chuck pounds the truck on the side. Go.

The truck roars out of the loading dock.

Everyone takes a breath. They are happy, proud.

LEV

We did it. All of them.

CHUCK

Great job, everyone. Remember, work together. We are like a hand...

They've heard this before. Lev holds up his hand just before

Chuck does.

LEV

One finger, weak. All fingers working together, strong.

This makes Chuck smile.

CHUCK

You got it.

EXT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY

A FedEx MD-11 is being loaded with huge containers of freight. Chuck goes up the gangway next to the forklifts.

INT. MD-11 - MOMENTS LATER

The pilots -- JACK and GWEN -- are going down their check lists. Chuck sticks his head in the cockpit.

CHUCK

I absolutely, positively, have to get to Memphis overnight.

JACK

Can't help you. Try UPS.

CHUCK

Jack -- gotta be something wrong with our physicals, you keep getting certified to fly. Gwen, aren't you worried?

GWEN

Terrified.

CHUCK

We're on time, right?

JACK

On time, Chuck.

Chuck hands Jack and Gwen small packages.

CHUCK

Little present from the emerging republics.

Another FedEx Road Warrior named STAN gets on. He and Chuck are obviously old hands at this.

CHUCK

What connects the world? What makes it one?

(they ignore him)

We do. FedEx.

GWEN

You are such a lifer.

STAN

What do you expect, from the guy who stole a kid's bicycle when his truck broke down?

CHUCK

Borrowed. I borrowed it.

The two of them strap in.

STAN

How'd it go?

CHUCK

Great. Terrific. The good guys won one for a change.

He's finished a tough job. He's relaxed and on his way home. But Stan's his boss, and Stan's got bad news.

STAN

I had to bump your plane last night.

Chuck can't believe it.

CHUCK

You what?

STAN

It was fifteen minutes late.

The plane begins to taxi.

CHUCK

I checked the weather, you had the jet stream, you could have made it up.

STAN

But I might not have.

CHUCK

Jesus. I got it working... You have no idea how hard it was... They're finally a team...

STAN

I'm touched.

CHUCK

You fucked us over.

STAN

The point of FedEx, as I understand it, is to make the damn connection.

CHUCK

I was making a point.

STAN

What? Let Paris hold its plane? Let Memphis take care of it? Let somebody down the line clean up your mess?

CHUCK

Every person counts, every package counts, that's my point.

STAN

You know what your problem is? You just see the packages in front of you. You don't see the big picture.

CHUCK

Baloney. I do see the damn "big picture."

EXT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - NIGHT

The MD-11 takes off.

INT. MD-11 - NIGHT

Chuck is focused on his PowerBook with the screen away from us, Stan is doing tai chi amidst the FedEx containers. It feels a little surreal, all those containers surrounding them.

Stan comes over, looks at the image on the computer. It's a sailboat with some technical specifications under it.

STAN

I didn't know we had sailboats.

CHUCK

It's a ketch Kelly and I had chartered.

STAN

For all those vacation days you got coming.

Chuck doesn't look up.

CHUCK

And never take.

STAN

Look, I'm sorry about your plane. But I couldn't risk being late into Memphis.

CHUCK

Forget it.

STAN

You know General McLelland, he wouldn't attack unless he had everything just right. Finally Abe Lincoln came to him and said, General, if you're not going to use my army, could I borrow it for a while? So he gave it to Grant and Grant just said, let's go.

CHUCK

I'm from Arkansas. Tell me a story with Robert E. Lee in it and maybe I'll pay attention.

STAN

We're warriors, not desk jockeys. We've got to be bold. You always want all your ducks lined up. But nothing's 100 percent. It's always 60-40, maybe 51-49. Hell, I'd take 40-60. Then roll the dice.

CHUCK

That's why you're a gambling man.

STAN

That's why I'm running foreign and you're not. That's why you're not married and I am.

CHUCK

For the third time.

STAN

Take the plunge, admit your mistakes, move on to tomorrow. That's FedEx,

that's women, that's life.

Stan is so outrageous, Chuck can't help but laugh.

CHUCK

You are one sick fucker.

STAN

I'm trying to help you here. There's Warsaw, there's this --

CHUCK

This was nothing like Warsaw. I held the truck then minutes, it's not that big a deal.

But apparently it is.

STAN

Look, that kids' bike, that's a guy who'll do what it takes to get there on time. Live up to your legend, that's all I'm saying.

Chuck reaches in his pocket, pulls out a bill.

CHUCK

A hundred rubles St. Petersburg hits 95 percent in a month.

STAN

Ninety five percent? Just give me the money now.

CHUCK

Talk is cheap. Are we on or not?

STAN

We're on.

Chuck closes the PowerBook.

CHUCK

Let's go off-line.

They both take out their Valium -- the price they pay for being such road warriors.

CHUCK

Two Valium...

Stan puts on his Walkman.

STAN

And the Stones. Got to be.

It's their ritual. Chuck puts headphones from his Walkman over his ears, puts a mask over his eyes and leans his head back onto the headrest. We hear the Rolling Stones.

EXT. MEMPHIS AIRPORT - NIGHT - WIDE

The MD-11 arrives at its gate. The cargo doors open. Forklifts and a gangway roll up to the side.

INT. MD-11 - NIGHT

Stan stands smiling over Chuck.

STAN

Chuck. Wake up Chuck.

Chuck pulls off the mask, takes out the earplugs. He manages a groggy grin.

STAN

You gotta do your own delivery from here.

INT. SUPERHUB - NIGHT

Chuck walks through the extraordinary nexus of speeding packages that intersect in intricate paths above and around him. This is the beating center of the FedEx world, the crossroads, the deep core where everything connects. In his still-drugged state it all seems weirdly psychedelic. A Christmas tree goes by, then a huge plastic Santa Claus, both with shipping labels.

EXT. CHICKASAW GARDENS - MEMPHIS - NIGHT

Chuck's car pulls into the driveway of a small cottage in an older Memphis neighborhood. The radio is playing the news.

INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck drops his briefcase and his bag. The place is a jumble of clothes, papers, books, etc. In the living room is a tank of tropical fish. The water looks a little green. No bubbles are coming from the filter.

Uh oh.

Chuck walks to the tank. He tightens a piece of tape that holds the power cord onto the filter, taps the filter with

his finger, once, twice...the bubbles start again.

CHUCK

Damn thing.

But for a couple of fish floating on top of the tank it's too late.

Chuck gets out his scoop and slowly skims them off.

CHUCK

Sorry, I'm really sorry.

EXT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - BACK YARD

Chuck digs a small hole in the back yard with a large kitchen spoon.

Drops the dead fish in.

Fills the hole.

INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - LATER

The CD is playing. Chuck lies in bed, switches on the TV. This is no good. He doesn't care how late it is, he's going to find Kelly.

EXT. MEMPHIS - NIGHT - LATER

Chuck drives in his car through the streets of Memphis.

EXT. UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

Chuck pulls up to a lab building at Memphis State.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Two doctoral candidates are playing Doom on their computers when Chuck walks in.

CHUCK

You seen Kelly Frears?

One of them gestures toward a door.

GUY

Xerox machine.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Chuck makes his way in the semi-darkness past rack after rack

of specimens in bottles.

Ahead of him we see the flashing green light of a Xerox machine.

INT. XEROX ROOM

The light goes off. KELLY leans over the machine, bangs on it.

KELLY

Sonofabitch!

CHUCK

Hey, be nice to it, it'll be nice to you.

Surprised, Kelly turns to greet Chuck.

KELLY

Chuck! You're back!

She leaps into his arms.

KELLY

Your eyes are puffy. Did you take Valium again?

CHUCK

You smell like formaldehyde.

Kelly looks over at the Xerox.

KELLY

My last chapter's in there, and the damn machine's jammed.

CHUCK

Let's take a look.

He lifts up the cover.

KELLY

How was Russia?

CHUCK

Cold.

KELLY

Don't overwhelm me with details, you know how I hate that. Did you get it fixed?

CHUCK

I thought I did.

He pries up one feeder, then another.

CHUCK

Got to follow the paper path here.

KELLY

Chuck, forget the Xerox. So Russia didn't turn out well?

But Chuck doesn't want to talk. He's focused on the machine.

CHUCK

Used to you could fix these yourself.

She pulls him out of the machine. He has toner on his fingers.

KELLY

Chuck.

CHUCK

What do you want me to say? That I thought I'd done a great job but it all turned to shit? That I might as well have gone sailing for all the good I did?

KELLY

Yeah, tell me. Tell me all of it.

He suddenly looks really tired.

KELLY

You don't even know what time it is. What day it is.

He turns to the Xerox in frustration.

CHUCK

And I can't fix this damn machine.

She looks at him.

KELLY

Come on.

INT. KELLY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A tiny cubicle with a door. She closes it, takes some paper towels out of the desk, wipes his fingers.

KELLY

We're on the deck of the ketch, the air's soft, the water's clear as crystal...

She licks the last bit of toner off his fingers.

CHUCK

That's carcinogenic.

She ignores that, stays with the fantasy.

KELLY

We're covered with suntan lotion and sweat. Our skin is so hot, it's glowing...

And she comes closer to him.

KELLY

We could take a swim.

She's really close now.

CHUCK

On the other hand we could not take a swim...

They squiggle themselves onto the desk.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Someone kicks the door shut. Now the figures are in silhouette, lit by the light in the office.

And then the light goes out.

EXT. FEDEX OFFICES - NEXT MORNING

A nondescript office park near the airport. No sign. Chuck's car screeches into the parking lot. He jumps out, glances at this watch, and heads for the building at a run.

INT. EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A large room dominated by an animated MAP OF THE WORLD. Lights at various locations blink and flash. Above the map are a large Sign saying "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow" and two huge digital Clocks -- one keeping time, the other a countdown clock for that day's package sort at the SuperHub.

The operations team of FedEx sits around a large table. Each has on a headset. BECCA TWIGG, the business-like senior vice

president of Operations, addresses questions to a man -- COLIN PARKER-BOWLES, the European operations manager -- on a LARGE TV SCREEN in front of her. "London" is superimposed on the screen.

BECCA

So why was Milan late, Colin?

COLIN

One of the race horses coming from Ireland got colic and had to be off-loaded in Brussels. That put the Jumbo 15, six hours late into Charles De Gaulle. Customs had difficulty locating the dutiable items...

Colin continues as Chuck, out of breath, slips under the screen and heads for the one remaining vacant seat -- across from Stan. Next to Stan is MAYNARD GRAHAM, an MBA systems man. Becca addresses a question over to Stan.

BECCA

Stan, can we get P&A down to work with Milan customs?

STAN

We're already on it.

BECCA

Good. And let's look at our live animal policy. I don't think the income stream justifies delaying IP product, especially at Christmas.

Colin disappears. A red light goes on. Becca pushes a button. Another face comes on the screen. "Oakland" appears under the face.

BECCA

Stand by, Benson, we're still wrapping up foreign.

She turns pointedly to Chuck.

BECCA

Chuck, thanks for joining us. Status?

Chuck swallows nervously, tries to talk matter-of-factly.

CHUCK

Becca, as you know St. Petersburg was consistently running late by six to ten

hours -- sometimes a full day or more. I replaced the station manager. We identified inefficiencies and worked out a quality improvement plan I believe can be met.

MAYNARD

You replaced the station manager with a driver. A local with no knowledge of our systems.

BECCA

Shouldn't you have brought in someone from Memphis? Russia is priority one.

MAYNARD

James Pottinger is available.

The process is being ripped out of Chuck's hands. He struggles to get an answer.

STAN

He's a numbers cruncher. Chuck's done all the right things here...

Stan is doing his best to back up Chuck.

CHUCK

Jim's a terrific financial man, no question. But we can't always parachute in from Memphis. We've got to build up our local staff.

MAYNARD

We've got to improve foreign on-time, that's what we've got to do. If this new guy's so good, how come the very first plane he sent missed the connection in Paris?

Maynard knows how to go for the jugular. Everyone looks at Chuck.

CHUCK

We're building a new team here. We got every package on the truck for the first time ever. Success is the best teacher.

MAYNARD

I don't call missing the plane a success.

Everyone looks at Chuck.

EXT. KELLY'S HOUSE - DAY - LATE THAT AFTERNOON

Chuck lugs a big package up to the door, knocks on it. Kelly opens the door.

KELLY

Merry Christmas eve.

CHUCK

Not if you work for FedEx.

INT. KELLY'S HOUSE - DAY

Chuck enters as they keep talking. Her house is cozy but also where she works. There's a computer, specimen jars, and some terrariums with frogs inside. A Christmas tree with packages under it.

KELLY

You break four million packages last night?

In the b.g. one of the packages by the Christmas tree is starting to shake on its own.

CHUCK

Four four. A record.

KELLY

You don't seem too happy about it.

CHUCK

Ah, the staff meeting could have gone better.

KELLY

Let me guess, Russia came up?

Chuck's attention goes to the tree.

CHUCK

One of those packages just moved.

The package turns over, something darts out. It's a puppy, with a bow around its neck.

KELLY

Merry Christmas.

Chuck bends down to see the puppy.

CHUCK

Hey, look at you.

KELLY

I figure, if we could take care of a puppy, we could, you know, take care of --

A baby, she wants to say, but that's going a little fast so she catches herself. Chuck picks the puppy up.

CHUCK

He is a cute thing.

KELLY

He's your cute thing.

CHUCK

I can't even keep fish alive.

KELLY

A puppy's got a little more personality than a fish.

CHUCK

And for you --

Chuck hands over his present.

KELLY

So do good things come in large packages?

Kelly opens Chuck's present -- a very large box.

It's a piece of luggage.

CHUCK

You know, for when you travel.

KELLY

For when I travel?

She can't believe it. It's the exact opposite of what she wanted.

KELLY

You should have got me something that shows you want us to be together, not apart.

Chuck is flummoxed. Women read so much into things.

CHUCK

I wasn't sending a message. I thought you'd like it.

Chuck's beeper goes off.

KELLY

You should have got me a ring.

He checks the number.

CHUCK

I have to go. I'm on call for overflow down at the Hub.

KELLY

A ring. I wanted a ring.

CHUCK

You did?

She nods. What to do?

CHUCK

Look, I love the puppy. I love you. But I have to go.

KELLY

You can't go now.

CHUCK

I have to.

KELLY

You want to.

Chuck picks up the puppy.

CHUCK

What should we call him? Or is it her? How about Jango?

Kelly is having one of those moments when everything comes clear.

KELLY

This isn't working out.

CHUCK

We're a little emotional here. It's Christmas, maybe we're over-reacting.

KELLY

"We're" not over-reacting.

CHUCK

Could you watch Jango?

KELLY

No.

CHUCK

I can't take him to work.

He hands her the puppy.

CHUCK

We'll talk about it when I come back.
It'll all be fine. Really.

This is not a happy woman he is leaving behind.

EXT. KELLY'S HOUSE - HOUSE LATER

It's dark now. Chuck returns. The stars are putting on an amazing show, but he doesn't notice as he heads for the door.

INT. KELLY'S HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Chuck enters. The tree and the presents under it are gone.

CHUCK

Kelly? Kelly?

No answer, nothing but the sound of Jango, who begins yelping in the kitchen.

INT. KELLY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck picks up Jango, who is barricaded in the kitchen with some food, some water, and some wet newspapers.

CHUCK

There. There. Easy now.

EXT. KELLY'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

Holding Jango, Chuck walks out into the back yard.

CHUCK

Kelly?

A fire still smolders. The packages have burned. The tree is a blackened mess.

Chuck stares at it.

EXT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Chuck gets into his car, puts Jango on the front seat next to him. Pulls out of the driveway.

EXT. ARKANSAS HIGHWAY - DAY

Chuck is in his car, with the dog on his lap.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Chuck's car drives up to a typical Arkansas farm house. His MOM is setting some Christmas tree lights around the door. Chuck gets out of the car. There's a large wet spot on the front of his pants.

MOM

What happened to your pants?

CHUCK

Mom, meet Jango.

Chuck displays the puppy.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - SHED - DAY

Chuck works on an old tractor in the shed. Some small legs appear in his vision, then a small face. This is AMANDA, his niece.

AMANDA

Dinner's ready.

INT. FARM HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Around the table are Chuck's brother ROGER, his wife MARY, Amanda, and her TWO BROTHERS. Mom brings in the turkey, places it on the table, sits down. They all hold hands and bow their heads.

MOM

Chuck?

Chuck hesitates just a moment.

CHUCK

Bless us O Lord, and these thy gifts,
which we are about to receive, from thou
bounty, through Christ the Lord. Amen.

ROGER

Let's eat.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - LATER THAT DAY

The children burst out the door, shrieking, chased by Jango.

INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

The grown-ups are cleaning up after Christmas dinner. The scene moves between the table, the kitchen counter, and the refrigerator. It's an old-fashioned kitchen, simply furnished.

MARY

How's Kelly?

CHUCK

Great.

ROGER

Thought you were going to bring her.

CHUCK

So did I.

MOM

It seemed like she had such a good time last time.

CHUCK

It's nothing you did, Mom, believe me.

MARY

Jennifer's still down at the post office. And she's still got that crush on you.

ROGER

And she's still got those --

MARY

Roger.

ROGER

You should have stuck around.

This is an old, sore subject.

CHUCK

Look, I help take care of the place. You got my check, didn't you Mom?

MOM

That new roof, that's your doing.

ROGER

You're just allergic to farming, that's what dad said. Can't stand to be alone. Can't stand to be in one place. Can't stand the sight of...blood.

He drops the turkey giblets into the trash.

MARY

Roger's going to put chickens in here.

Chuck can't believe this.

CHUCK

Come on Roger, this is dad all over again. You already did beefalo, chinchillas, and what was that, ostrich? They chased Mom around the yard, sprained her hip.

Mom goes to the freezer and takes out some frozen strawberries.

MOM

It wasn't that bad, dear.

MARY

You can't make a living out of this place. We tried.

CHUCK

But chickens?

ROGER

Sixty three pounds consumed per capita, up from twenty seven in 1960. Going to pass beef. Chicken's global. No religious taboos. You don't see your Hindus and your Muslims boycotting poultry.

CHUCK

True enough. No sacred chickens nowhere, so far as I know.

MOM

Roger's working at Tyson's now.

Mom mashes the block of frozen strawberries with a fork to separate the strawberries from the ice.

CHUCK

Really?

ROGER

Come on down to the plant. It's state of the art. We're doing for chickens what FedEx did for the delivery business.

CHUCK

Just don't count 'em before they hatch.

Roger grins at him. This is just how they are.

ROGER

I'll try to remember that.

MOM

Dessert.

They all sit down. Mom brings the slushy frozen strawberries to the table, squirts on some Reddi-whip. Looks pointedly at Chuck.

MOM

Speaking of hatching, I could sure use some more grandchildren.

Not a timely topic with Chuck.

CHUCK

Mom, this is a farm. We've got real strawberries growing outside, we've got real cream.

MOM

Oh no, the prodigal son's home. We bring out the store bought.

Chuck takes a bite, winces a little as the cold strawberries hit his teeth.

EXT. MOM'S HOUSE - LATER THAT DAY

Chuck fixes the drain pipe while Mom prunes the rose bushes around the porch.

CHUCK

Maybe I should take a few days off. Roger's working now, you could use some

help around here...

MOM

Don't you even think about it.

CHUCK

The place is falling apart.

MOM

I'm doing fine.

She looks pointedly at Chuck.

CHUCK

Doing great, Mom, don't worry about me.

MOM

There's settled folks, and there's
nomads. You're just not a settled folk.
You never belonged here.

Chuck finishes the drain pipe. Gives it a thunk with his
finger.

CHUCK

Come on inside, Mom. You've had a long
day.

INT. FARM HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

In his boyhood room, we see Chuck's laptop, which is hooked
up to the internet FedEx homepage. All around him are models
of boats and planes, maps, pictures of far-off places. The
room of a boy who always fantasized about getting away.

Chuck is beside it, slumped down on the desk. Asleep.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

His mom waves to him as Chuck drives away.

INT. FEDEX OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

Chuck enters his office, on the go. His assistant LESLIE is
waiting for him.

CHUCK

I need the latest PDRs on St. Petersburg.

LESLIE

And how was your Christmas?

CHUCK

Terrific. Yours?

She nods, used to this.

CHUCK

And get me in to the dentist. My tooth's acting up.

Stan enters.

STAN

Malaysia's tanking. We're meeting in ten in operations.

CHUCK

Right.

(to Leslie)

Get me everything on Indonesia, New Guinea, all the way to Australia.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Chuck, Leslie, Stan and another executive from the meeting named DICK are gathered around the TV screen. A squawk box is on the table.

CHUCK

Kamal? Kamal? Can you hear us?

The box squawks. The TV screen rolls an imperfect image.

DICK

Can't we get this working?

A Technician is fiddling with the TV set.

TECHNICIAN

Trying.

CHUCK

Kamal, you're breaking up. Can you hear us?

VOICE (SQUAWK BOX)

Kamal is not here.

CHUCK

Who is this? Where is Kamal?

VOICE (SQUAWK BOX)

It is Ibrim, I, I am a sorter.

CHUCK

What's going on down there?

VOICE (SQUAWK BOX)

Kamal is not here. We are very defused.

CHUCK

Who's in charge then, where is Chinn?

The squawk box hums and crackles. Nothing. Chuck turns to the Technician.

STAN

We got Telex, e-mail?

TECHNICIAN

Sure. Just not getting any answers.

Chuck turns to Leslie.

CHUCK

When's the next Jumbo?

LESLIE

The regular flight is scheduled for oh three hundred tomorrow.

CHUCK

Anything else?

LESLIE

There's a sweep leaving Memphis in an hour, goes through Sydney.

STAN

Maybe you should get your ducks lined up first.

Chuck looks over at Stan.

CHUCK

Call Operations. Get me on it.

And Stan is impressed.

EXT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - DAY

Chuck leaves with his bag over his shoulder and the puppy under his arm.

EXT. KELLY'S HOUSE - DAY - MINUTES LATER

Kelly opens the door. Chuck is there with the puppy.

KELLY

That's your dog.

CHUCK

It's our dog. It belongs to us.

KELLY

There isn't any us.

CHUCK

Yes there is.

Kelly can't stay mad.

KELLY

I'm sorry about the presents. I got a little carried away.

CHUCK

No, it was great. Maybe a little overkill --

KELLY

I burned the Christmas tree.

She's half-laughing, half-wanting-to-cry.

KELLY

Why didn't you come over, get mad at me, tell me what a stupid bitch I was.

CHUCK

I guess I hadn't thought through how I felt.

KELLY

What, you were going to come over the next day all calm and say, Kelly that really made me mad? Don't tell me you're mad. Be mad. Be who you are right now.

CHUCK

Look, we'll do our trip as soon as I get back.

KELLY

Don't even start.

And then it hits her.

KELLY

Get back? From where?

CHUCK

Malaysia. They're holding the sweep.

She stares at him for a long moment, then at the puppy.

KELLY

Give him to me.

He hands her the dog.

KELLY

Chuck, you're breaking my heart.

CHUCK

A week, max. Okay? Okay?

KELLY

Go on. We'll be fine. I'll feed Jango to the frogs.

She kisses the puppy.

INT. FEDEX PLANE - NIGHT

Chuck enters the cockpit, where two different pilots are going through their checklists. Chuck repeats his familiar patter.

CHUCK

Al -- gotta be something wrong with our physicals, you keep getting certified to fly. John, aren't you worried?

JOHN

I disconnected his controls. He only thinks he's flying.

Chuck settles into his seat.

CHUCK

You're on your way home, Al?

Al has an Australian accent.

AL

Right. Down home, down under.

CHUCK

We're on time, right?

AL

On time, Chuck.

INT. FEDEX PLANE - NIGHT - HOURS LATER

Settled into the jump seat, Chuck finishes up his notes on his PowerBook and begins his flight ritual.

He puts in his ear plugs and takes out his Valium. He swallows one, then thinks, and swallows two more. Then he turns on his Walkman to the Rolling Stones, puts the mask over his eyes, and, as usual, goes to sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FEDEX PLANE - NIGHT

The plane is SHAKING badly. HEAR frantic, garbled radio talk. Chuck stirs, struggles to his feet, drowsy and drugged.

INT. FEDEX PLANE - CHUCK'S POV

Everything is hazy, out of focus, as it was in his earlier drugged condition. But this is real haze. SMOKE. And the cabin also TWISTS and TILTS.

Chuck tries to steady himself against the wall. This is nightmarish. Is this really happening?

INT. FEDEX PLANE - CHUCK'S POV - COCKPIT

The pilots wrestle with the controls. They have their life jackets on. John glances back at Chuck, his face floating in a cloud of fear.

INT. FEDEX PLANE - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck struggles to put on his life jacket. The plane is VIBRATING VIOLENTLY. He can't get the straps straight. He is KNOCKED against one wall, then another, then to the floor.

Chuck tries to blow on the mouth tubes for his life jacket. Can't do it! Puff. Puff. Shit! John motions frantically for Chuck to pull on the automatic inflators on his jacket. Chuck fumbles for them.

Huge palettes shift and groan, one BREAKS FREE, banging violently against the side of the plane, spilling out its boxes. Then it swings and KNOCKS Chuck on the head! He goes

down!

INT. GLOBAL OPERATIONS CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

A CONTROLLER mans the global operations desk. His SUPERVISOR stands behind him, sipping some coffee. The mood is eerily calm. An assistant moves Plane Locator Cards on a giant board.

CONTROLLER

Jumbo 14 is overdue in Sector K.

SUPERVISOR

Where are they?

Another CONTROLLER tracks a giant computer screen.

CONTROLLER 2

Somewhere east of Port Moresby. Guam is getting a signal but no location. Maybe the GPS is out.

The signal flashes, but is strangely still compared to the others, which are moving.

EXT. FEDEX PLANE - NIGHT

The giant plane PLUMMETS down from the sky.

INT. FEDEX PLANE - NIGHT

Chuck is semi-conscious and bleeding from the head. John pulls the inflators on Chuck's life jacket, which fills with a WHOOSH!, sending Chuck's arms out to the sides. Al struggles with the LIFE RAFT. It's all blurred, frantic, terrifying.

EXT. PACIFIC - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

The plane hits the ocean with a CRASH and a WAVE of water.

INT. GLOBAL OPERATIONS CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The Controller is speaking mechanically into the microphone.

CONTROLLER

Guam, I need a fix on Jumbo 14.

EXT. PACIFIC - NIGHT

Shrouded with fog and surrounded by debris, the tail of the big plane slowly SINKS beneath the angry, storm-driven waves.

EXT. PACIFIC - DAY

A life raft is tossed on dark, storm-driven seas. Inside it, semi-conscious, Chuck hangs on.

EXT. PACIFIC - NIGHT

We catch glimpses of the yellow life raft in the dark as the storm continues.

EXT. BEACH - EARLY MORNING

The storm has ended. Waves lap gently on a beach cut like a scallop out of a rocky shore. On the beach we see scattered FEDEX BOXES. And we see, face-down, half-buried in sand, a MAN IN A SUIT and a life jacket.

Chuck.

The tide gently rocks him, laps at his face. He chokes. Slowly he gets to his knees. Vomits seawater, big heaves. He rolls over, sits down. Dazed. Still confused. Where am I? What happened?

Chuck's first instinct is to check the time. He looks at his watch, taps it in frustration.

Then he looks around, and we look with him.

CHUCK'S POV - BEACH

The fog has thinned. We can see palm groves and mangrove thickets leading back into a thickly wooded valley climbing up a steep, rocky hillside. The rocks on the opposite point end in a barren ridge. Clouds hide the top of the hill.

ON CHUCK

as he takes in his surroundings. He licks his lips. He's thirsty. But something he sees is even more important. We stay with him as he WALKS. He comes to a FEDEX PACKAGE in the sand, picks it up, brushes off the sand, walks farther. He picks up another package.

EXT. BEACH - WIDE

Chuck walks down the beach, picking up FedEx packages, leaving a trail of footprints in the sand. Ahead of him we notice a package decorated with ANGEL WINGS.

EXT. BEACH - LATER THAT MORNING

Chuck has made a neat stack of FedEx boxes under some palm trees at the rim of the beach. He examines the Angel Wing drawing with passing curiosity, then puts it on the stack.

Chuck takes off his life jacket, sits down in the shade, makes himself comfortable, and waits.

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

Chuck is still waiting. He's a systems man, and the system isn't working.

CHUCK

All right, guys. I'm here. Check the GPS, get moving.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The full moon shines a ghostly light on the beach. Trees cast moon-shadows on the sand. Chuck seems very, very alone.

We HEAR from the dark thickets a STRANGE NOISE. Rustling in the leaves. Something crashing in the trees, or is it a wave? A jolt of adrenaline courses through Chuck's body. He lurches to his feet.

We HEAR the noises again. Chuck edges toward the rocks at the barb of the hook. Keeping his eye on the thicket, he bends down and picks up a stone. His first weapon.

In the rocks he finds a piece of driftwood. He picks it up in his other hand. He backs between two rocks and stands facing the thicket, every sense alert. A cloud passes over the moon. The shadow streaks across Chuck's anxious face.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

The morning TIDE is coming in. We follow the tide as it laps amidst the rocks and finds Chuck, staring out to sea. The empty sea.

CHUCK

Where the fuck are you?

But now he is really thirsty. We WALK with Chuck up the beach.

Beneath the palms he sees a couple of coconuts. He picks one of them up and studies it. It's heavy, almost the size of a volleyball. How to get in it?

He throws it down on a rock. The coconut just bounces off. He wedges the coconut between two rocks, then throws a rock down on it. It bounces off. He throws down a bigger rock. It smashes on the rocks and chips. Chuck picks up the rock. OW! Where the rock had chipped the edge is sharp. It cuts him.

CHUCK

Sonofabitch.

The blood stains the rock a bright red. Chuck sucks on his finger, then he gets an idea -- the same idea primitive man first got when he discovered stone tools.

He picks up the rock, test the edge. Sharp -- really sharp. He throws another rock down, but it doesn't break. He picks up another rock and strikes the first one. Then again, harder. And again. A large flake shoots off. This edge is even sharper.

He has a knife.

OPENING THE COCONUT - SERIES OF SHOTS

Chuck uses the stone knife to saw at the coconut. No luck.

Chuck clumsily sharpens a stick with the sharp rock.

Chuck brings the sharpened stick down hard on the coconut, but the stick slides off, sending the coconut rolling away.

Chuck positions the stick, pointed end up, in a hole, then SLAMS the coconut down hard on it. Success! The green nut of the coconut splits. The brown inner nut is free! He smashes the nut with a rock, but -- OW! -- he hits his hand! Chuck licks his fingers, but he is so thirsty there's no more saliva. He smashes again. The shell breaks to smithereens. Coconut milk splashes everywhere.

CHUCK

That was smart, really smart.

Rotating a nut along its axis and carefully moving his fingers out of the way, he SMASHES the nut again. The shell splits! The precious liquid splashes out. Left inside is a swallow or two, which Chuck laps up eagerly. The milky white liquid dribbles down his face.

CHUCK

Ahhh.

EXT. BEACH - SUNRISE

Chuck squints at the ocean. His sunburn is bad -- his lips are cracked. A stack of broken coconut shells is beside him. No one's there -- again.

CHUCK

Maybe the GPS malfunctioned. That Korean airliner did.

Clouds scud in front of the sun. Beyond the reef the waves are high and churning. Chuck can see them pound onto the reef.

CHUCK

Okay, do the math. Maybe they know where you are within, say 500 miles. That's a circle with an area of, uh, πr^2 . So, uh, 250,000 times three point one four, that's about 800,000 square miles. Three times the size of Texas.

This sinks in. Then Chuck gets an idea.

CHUCK

They could use a satellite.

But even that doesn't give him much hope.

CHUCK

Say each satellite photo is 30 feet square, that's uh...fuck it...billions and billions of photos.

That sinks in.

CHUCK

Aw, someone will come.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Chuck sleeps by the coconuts. The tide is coming in. Chuck stirs, gets up, staggers over to a palm tree to relieve himself.

He stares idly out at the moonlight on the waves. Then not so idly. Something's out there, something floating on the tide.

CHUCK

What the hell?

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck splashes into the gentle surf, reaches the dark object.

It's a body. Chuck turns it over. It's Al, one of the pilots, his face gray and waterlogged and very dead.

CHUCK

Oh Jesus.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck drags the body up on the beach and then collapses, exhausted. He sits by it, staring at it.

CHUCK

I'm so sorry, Al. So sorry.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

Chuck has almost finished a grave in the sand back of the palm trees. He's been digging with a piece of driftwood sharpened with his stone knife.

He drags the body into the pit. Stares down at it. That could be me.

CHUCK

Got to cover Al up.

He wants to say more, can't. He scoops some sand over the body.

CHUCK

Got to cover Al up.

He scoops in some more sand. It's eerily like burying the tropical fish in his back yard.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

With a rock Chuck hammers a crude driftwood marker into the sand.

EXT. BEACH - LATER THAT DAY

As Chuck sits on the beach, he half-sings, half-talks "Yellow Submarine" very quietly to himself.

CHUCK

We all live in a yellow submarine, yellow submarine...

He looks over at the deep woods and down to the rocky point. Comes to a decision. He takes a drink of coconut, picks up his club and a coconut, sticks the stone knife in his pants. He's ready to go.

EXT. BEACH - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck climbs over the rocks and disappears out of sight. He's still half-singing to himself.

CHUCK

Yellow submarine. We all live in a
yellow submarine...

EXT. ISLAND - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck's way is blocked by rocks and jungle. He hesitates. He picks up a rock and THROWS IT to scare away all those bad things. It crashes into the ferns and palm trees. He takes a step into the jungle.

EXT. JUNGLE - MINUTES LATER

Chuck struggles through a dense thicket beneath a jungle canopy. Vines and creepers reach out toward him. There is no path, nothing to show him where to go.

EXT. JUNGLE - HALF HOUR LATER

Chuck climbs through a tangle of vines and ferns. He takes a drink from the coconut he is carrying. The last drink.

CHUCK

Bad idea. Should have saved some.

He throws away the husk. He looks up, but the only sunlight reaching him is dappled from the canopy above him.

EXT. ISLAND - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck emerges onto a ridge that leads to a summit. He climbs across a rocky lava field covered with scrub lichen and low ferns, soil dark as coffee beans, his way crossed by steep gullies that cut like dark fingers into the lava.

The lava field narrows, forcing Chuck closer to the sea. He passes a series of CAVES, their mouths dark and mysterious and scary. He gives them a wide berth.

EXT. ISLAND - CLIFF - MOMENTS LATER

The land narrows to a ledge that stretches across a high

cliff perched over the ocean. Beyond this rock bridge the path smoothes out to a summit.

Chuck stares at the narrow bridge, then down at the waves breaking on the rocks far below. To get any view, he will have to cross the bridge. He's thirsty. The late afternoon sun is hot.

CHUCK

Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you enjoy the play?

Hugging the wall of the cliff, taking each step with great caution, he sets out across the bridge.

EXT. ISLAND - CLIFF

Step by step, Chuck negotiates the narrow bridge. He reaches a flume of polished basalt which cuts across the ledge like a slide in a water park -- except this flume ends high above the waves. Chuck tries to step across it, can't quite, tries one foot first, then the other.

CHUCK

Shit!

He looks back, but that seems even scarier.

CHUCK

Got to get there. Got to see. C'mon... c'mon. Don't be such a wuss. Be bold.

He looks down at the ocean beneath him, closes his eyes, and jumps. It's only a few feet, but he's breathing hard when he lands on the other side. He hugs the rocks, getting his breath.

EXT. ISLAND SUMMIT - SUNSET - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck looks to each point on the compass. He is on an ISLAND, small, inhospitable, without sign of habitation or anything human. On three sides the waves break against steep, hostile cliffs. A reef encloses the cove where he came from.

CHUCK

No way on. No way off.

Chuck stares out to sea in every direction. Nothing.

CHUCK

This is bad. Really, really bad.

The last rays of sun hit his face. The ocean turns a deep reddish gold.

EXT. CLIFF - MOMENTS LATER

Going down is even scarier. It's dusk and the light is flat and gray. Chuck stares at the ledge.

CHUCK

Come on. Crawl if you have to.

Chuck crawls on his hands and knees across the rock bridge.

EXT. ROCKY SLOPE - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck stumbles over the rocks. The caves look ominous and primal.

EXT. EDGE OF JUNGLE - NIGHT

It's getting dark now. The jungle seems impenetrable, the dark wood of fable. Chuck hesitates, then plunges into it.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT MINUTES LATER

The moon has just begun to rise, casting eerie light into the jungle. The shadows reach out to grab Chuck, then real branches and vines tug at him. He heads into thick blackness.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT - LATER

Chuck emerges around the rocks. He reaches the stack of familiar FedEx boxes -- Ahh, home! He's breathing hard, from both fear and exertion.

CHUCK

Got to drink. Got to drink something.

With his last strength he opens a coconut on the stick. He bangs hard on the shell and gulps down the milk. He stares at the stack of FedEx boxes. What could be inside? He reaches out and touches one.

CHUCK

They don't belong to you.

Responsibility gets the better of necessity, and he takes his hand away.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

Face red from the sun, Chuck hacks at a palm frond with his stone knife. He saws the palm frond off near the base, leaving it about a foot long.

CHUCK

Got to have shade. Got to have a hat.

He ties the loose fibers into a sort of circle, then sets it upon his head. It looks amazingly like some sort of primitive cap.

He grabs a couple of FedEx boxes and heads for the beach.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Chuck finishes the P on H E L P, which he has spelled out with the FedEx boxes on the beach.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY - LATER

Chuck scrambles down a ravine. He kneels down and feels the ground. It is dry, completely dry.

EXT. LAVA SLOPE - DAY

Chuck traverses the slope, determined to find water.

A FLAT ROCK - LATER

With a puddle of dirty water trapped in a tiny hollow. Suddenly Chuck flops down into frame. He tries to scoop up some water in his hands, but he just splashes it around. He licks his fingers. Then he gets down on his stomach and laps up the water with his tongue. Like an animal.

In the bottom of the small depression is some fine mud. He rubs it on his reddened face and across his burned lips.

CHUCK

Oh, God. Thank you.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Chuck lies in darkness, his eyes reflecting the moon.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Chuck is drenched in sweat. He is at the bottom of a hole six feet deep. He takes one last dig with the flat stick, then licks the moist clay that sticks to it.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Chuck breaks open another coconut and gulps down the milky liquid. With a stone knife he digs in the shell for some of the meat, but it's dry and chewy and fibrous. He spits it out, then lies back on the sand and stares at the first stars. Half sings to himself.

CHUCK

You deserve a break today...

He is desperately thirsty. Hunger gnaws at him.

EXT. BEACH - DAY - LATER

Holding a sharpened stick, Chuck wades in the shallows at low tide, looking for fish. It's difficult to keep his balance. Suddenly a shadow flashes by, glinting in the morning sunlight. Chuck hurls the spear, which ricochets off the water and floats away.

Chuck plunges into the water after the fish with his bare hands. The fish reverses direction. Chuck leaps after it and goes under. He comes up spluttering, on his hands and knees in the shallows.

Suddenly a whole school of fish swims by him, moving in unison, like one creature, splitting around Chuck like mercury. He grabs at them desperately. Nothing.

CHUCK

Damn fish!

On some rocks he sees clusters of limpets. He takes a rock and tries to dislodge one, but it smashes into a soggy mess.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Discouraged, he sits down on the beach and gets his breath.

Idly, Chuck takes out his wallet. The money is soaked. He lays it out to dry. He finds a PHOTOGRAPH OF KELLY, soaked and mushy.

He tries to smooth it out. For a moment he is overcome. His face tightens, his eyes get moist. He stares out to sea.

CHUCK

Wait a minute. Wait just a minute.

He picks up his wallet again and takes out a credit card.

EXT. BEACH - MINUTES LATER

Chuck wades in the water, stops by a rock covered with limpets. He uses a CREDIT CARD to scrape off a limpet.

CHUCK

Don't leave home without it.

With his finger, he prods around in the mucous-like meat, then tilts up the shell and we see the gooey gray stuff slide off the shell into his mouth.

CHUCK

Yuck.

He starts to spit it out. Tries to make himself like it.

CHUCK

Yumm.

And he swallow it.

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

Chuck sits in the shade of a palm tree surrounded by a pile of smashed coconut husks and a stack of limpet shells. He checks his watch for a moment.

CHUCK

Got to get this fixed.

But what's the point? Everything that was so valuable before is useless now.

EXT. JUNGLE - LATER

Chuck digs yet another hole. He chants to himself, almost delusionally.

CHUCK

Water, water, everywhere, water, water
everywhere...

Covered in sweat, desperate and exhausted, he throws down his wooden spade.

CHUCK

Where's the water on this fucking island?

He lies on his back, breathing hard. Pulls his hat over his eyes.

CHUCK

Just rest a minute.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY - LATER

Chuck is lying in the hole. We find his feet. Slowly water is oozing out of the clay, a puddle is building around his toes.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY - LATER

Chuck's eyes snap awake. He looks down at his feet. There's a pool of muddy water there. He dips his hand in it, touches a finger to his lips to be sure he's not dreaming.

He grabs his sharpened stone, begins to attack the clay.

CHUCK

Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah.

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

Chuck carefully makes marks on a palm tree with his rock knife. One for each day. Very neat. Very precise. Very Chuck.

CHUCK

Let's see, I waited two days.

(makes marks)

Then I buried Al.

(slowly makes another mark)

Al. You never made it home, buddy. Then American Express got me those clam things...

(makes another mark)

I dug all those damn holes, the clouds over the moon...

(makes more marks)

And today, the historic discovery of H, Two, Oh.

(makes a tenth mark and underlines it)

Ten days. Shit.

For a moment, he feels the weight of his isolation. Then he allows himself a deep breath. There is order now, after all. Time is under control.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

Very carefully, but standing this time, Chuck makes his way across the ledge.

EXT. SUMMIT - DAY

He emerges on the top, takes a drink from a hand-made canteen, and looks in all directions. Again, he sees nothing but ocean.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

He resumes his efforts at fishing. A shape scuttles raggedly beneath him.

CHUCK

A crab, it's a crab.

He freezes, holding his spear motionless. Then he jabs at the crab -- misses! The crab scurries away toward the rocks.

CHUCK

Dammit!

Chuck splashes after it, stabbing as he goes, falling, getting up, stabbing again.

Suddenly one stab feels different. Chuck carefully lifts up the spear. On the end is a squirming crab.

CHUCK

I did it. I did it!

He walks carefully with it to the beach. Lowering the spear, he lets the crab slip off. It darts toward the water. Chuck heads it off, trying to avoid the snapping claws.

He kicks it back toward the beach, then slams a rock down on it. He twists off a crab claw, expecting to see flaky white meat. But a crab has an exoskeleton. The flesh simply pours out, like mucous.

CHUCK

Jesus.

This is too much. He needs the next step, from the raw to the cooked. The crucial next step from primitive man to the beginnings of civilization.

EXT. PALM GROVE SERIES OF SHOTS - TRYING TO MAKE FIRE

Chuck rubs two sticks together. Nothing.

Chuck positions a makeshift drill in a hole he has scooped out in a piece of driftwood. He spins the drill with great

effort. Nothing.

CHUCK

Stupid fucking thing!

He quits, exhausted. He looks at his hands. They are raw and blistered. He feels like Job.

CHUCK

I don't know what I did, God, but whatever is was, I am really, really sorry. You hear me? Really sorry.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Chuck emerges from the jungle and walks to the edge of the ocean. He dips his blistered hands into the sea water, then looks over at the FedEx boxes that spell out H E L P.

CHUCK

Don't have a choice, do I?

He walks over and picks a few boxes up from the P.

EXT. PALM GROVE - DAY

With his stone knife and spear to help him. Chuck begins to open the FedEx boxes. Chuck rips open the end of one box and shakes it. Out tumble some videotapes. Chuck looks at them: what good are they?

Chuck tears another box open. Out slide some legal papers covered with Post-its.

In quick cuts, we see him dump out computer memory boards, some designer dresses, flowers, a pair of roller blades, a script with a red cover -- which he never reads.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

By now he has taken all the boxes in the P. Only H E L remains. He pauses to let the irony of that sink in, then collects more boxes. He is even more exhausted.

EXT. PALM GROVE

Two boxes remain. One is the box with Angel Wings. Chuck sets it aside. He opens the other box. Out tumbles a DOCTOR'S BAG. Chuck can't believe it. He opens the bag. It's full of great stuff. Medicine. A scalpel. A saw.

CHUCK

Okay. Okay now.

EXT. PALM GROVE - LATER

Hands bandaged, Chuck tries to strike a spark on the roller blade wheel housing. Tries over and over. Nothing.

He takes a long drink from his canteen, and flinches. His tooth is starting to hurt. He fishes some Tylenol out of the surgeon's bag and takes two.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF ISLAND - DAY

Chuck picks some berries and gingerly tries them. They're not bad. He eats more. Then more. What a relief.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Chuck lies on his palm fronds, groaning and holding his stomach. He drags himself to his knees, crawls a few feet, and throws up in great, violent heaves.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Still looking a little green, Chuck marks another day on his tree calendar.

EXT. SUMMIT

He stares out to sea. Nothing.

EXT. WELL - DAY

Chuck lies on his belly and drinks from the well, which has filled with water. Then he washes his face and splashes water over his neck. The surface of the well stills, bringing CHUCK'S REFLECTION into focus. He stares at himself.

Very carefully Chuck shaves with the surgeon's scalpel.

Chuck checks out his new appearance in the water. Much better. A clean start now.

EXT. BEACH - LATER THAT DAY

He sits in front of his failed efforts to make fire.

CHUCK

You're not getting it hot enough. Got to hold the heat. Got to hold the heat.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Chuck carefully shaves some tinder. Puts it under a piece of bamboo split lengthwise with a notch cut across it.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Chuck uses a bamboo stick to try to make friction in the split half of the bamboo. He saws back and forth with all his might, pressing it down in the groove.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Chuck gives one last saw with his bamboo and stops, utterly defeated. It's all too much.

CHUCK

Sonofabitch!

He starts to rub again. He breathes hard, sweat pours off his face. He is really going for it, what the hell! A tiny wisp of smoke appears! Chuck saws with even more energy.

CHUCK

Come on. Come on.

The smoke increases. Chuck rips away the bamboo, grabs the nest of shavings, and blows on it frantically. The smoke flickers and dies. Chuck can't believe it.

CHUCK

No. No. No.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Chuck lies in his bed of palm fronds, shivering. He looks up at the stars, which blaze furiously.

CHUCK

That's the big dipper...Orion...or is that the Southern Cross...? Kelly would know.

And he misses her so much. A shower of meteors streaks across the sky, as if the very heavens are raining down on Chuck.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Chuck readies his two sticks of bamboo again and begins sawing with tremendous energy. He smells something. Is it smoke? He pulls off the log and looks eagerly at the nest of

tinder. There's nothing there.

CHUCK

Dammit!

He replaces the log and starts wearily to saw again.

TIME CUT

The sun has moved in the sky. Chuck is still sawing. Again the smoke appears. Again sweat pours from his face. The smoke increases. He saws even harder. His breath comes in anguished gulps. Smoke is curling up now. Chuck tears away the bamboo, picks up the nest of kindling, and blows on it gently. The smoke increases.

He blows some more. A fragile crimson spark appears.

CHUCK

Careful now, careful...

He gently places the nest of shavings in the kindling, then blows on it with utmost care, as if he were holding life itself. He shreds his money and business cards over the tiny flame.

Suddenly, the evening breeze lifts the nest out of the kindling. Desperate, Chuck grabs it. Trying to shield it with his body, he grabs some palm fronds and jams them into the sand, trying to make a windbreak. They rustle and shake and blow over.

The wind blows harder. Chuck jams some rocks in a circle to make an eddy. But the fire is out. No words now, just a loud, primal groan of pure despair.

And then, into his vision floats...smoke.

Chuck looks down. A wisp of smoke curls up from the nest of tinder! Chuck blows on it gently. Suddenly a tiny tongue of flame flickers and catches on the kindling!

CHUCK

Yes! Yes! Yes!

He feeds in some more twigs, more tinder. The flames lick out, catch, grow.

CHUCK

If I ever forgot to thank you God, and I am sure I did, thank you now.

EXT. BEACH - WIDE - NIGHT

The fire burns on the beach. Chuck rushes about, piling on driftwood.

EXT. BEACH - CLOSER

Chuck darts into the jungle and returns dragging a huge log. He throws it on the fire. We see his face in the light of the fire. He is exultant. He dances. He sings at the top of his lungs. Papa-ooo-mow-mow!

Chuck throws another huge log on the fire. Papa-papa-papa-oooo! The log splutters and explodes, sending up a huge shower of sparks that climb and sparkle in the darkness...until they merge with the stars.

EXT. PALM GROVE - MORNING

Chuck makes a mark on the tree. Around it he carves a flame -- the day he mastered fire.

EXT. PALM GROVE - LATER THAT MORNING

Chuck sharpens his spear with his stone knife. Then he sticks it in the flame to harden it, pulls it out, checks it, scrapes some more.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Chuck wades in the water with his spear. Suddenly he stabs it down. A crab is on the end.

EXT. BEACH - HALF HOUR LATER

Chuck removes a crab from out of the fire and breaks a steaming crab claw. Chuck takes a bite of the flaky white meat. Ahhh. It tastes great. He takes another bite -- and flinches.

CHUCK

Damn tooth!

He fumbles for his Tylenol and takes two pills.

EXT. SUMMIT - SUNSET

Chuck stands on the summit, looking in all directions. Then, something on the island brings Chuck's eyes back from their distant focus on the horizon. From down on the beach, beneath the palm grove, there curls a thin column of smoke. Chuck lets a bit of pride creep into his face as he sees it.

He kneels down and begins to build a signal fire.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT - LATER

Chuck curls up in his bed of palm fronds. The fire burns. Around it is a large stack of crab shells. He stares into the fire.

EXT. PALM GROVE - MORNING

Chuck makes another mark on the tree. He has circled the tree with marks several times now.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Using a safety pin and some suturing thread, Chuck fishes carefully. Suddenly he jerks his hand back. On the end is a flopping fish.

EXT. PALM GROVE - DAY

Chuck takes a cooked fish off the fire and mixes it with some breadfruit. He eats the soft mixture, chewing carefully, but his tooth hurts even worse. There are only a few Tylenol tablets left. He carefully cuts one in half and swallows it.

EXT. SUMMIT - AFTERNOON

Chuck arrives with the wood for the night. He stares out to sea as usual, but this time he sees something different.

WHALES. He sees whales. Leaping. Broaching. Spouting. Water pouring off fins and flukes. Moving. Going somewhere.

CHUCK

Beautiful. So beautiful.

Chuck stares at them, stares until the ocean darkens and he can see them no more. It's late now.

Leaving, he takes one last look, as he always does. And another remarkable sight greets his eyes. There, on the horizon, just below the evening star, is a...LIGHT. He stares at it, fixed.

CHUCK

A star. It's a star.

But then he stares at it really hard.

CHUCK

It's a ship.

EXT. WOODS - TREE - NEXT DAY

A tree shakes and moves, quivers...

CHUCK

Timberrrr!

...then slowly falls with a CRASH!

CHUCK

I heard that...

Chuck holds his surgeon's saw over the stump. He walks to another tree and begins to saw his way into the trunk.

EXT. BEACH - SERIES OF SHOTS

Up above the high tide line, Chuck lashes a log to a row of five logs already joined with vines.

CHUCK

No more waiting. Take action.

Chuck sews several designer dresses together with needle and suturing thread for a sail.

CHUCK

That's right. Take action.

He cuts bamboo for the mast. He carves driftwood for an oar.

He fills gourds with water, stores breadfruit and coconut as he sings "Fly Me to the Moon" to himself.

He ties the sail to the mast and extends it with a bamboo boom lashed on with palm fiber and video tape. He ties on the doctor's kit and the FedEx box with the angel wings.

He examines his handiwork: a finished raft.

He brings out his old life preserver and puts it on, then grabs hold of one corner of the raft to pull it down to the beach. It doesn't budge. He tries to pull it again. Nothing. He leans his back into it and pushes with his legs. Nothing. He collapses on the beach, his breath coming in heaves.

CHUCK

How could I be so stupid?

He bangs himself on the head, over and over.

CHUCK

Stupid, stupid, stupid.

EXT. PALM GROVE - NIGHT

Chuck throws new firewood on the dwindling fire. It comes back to life. Meteors streak again across the sky. He stares at the indifferent stars. The moon is almost full. Shadows of palm trees sway on the sand.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Chuck stands by the edge of the water, which shimmers in the reflected light of the fire. A wave come in, licks at his toes. Lifts up a coconut husk, sweeps it gently out. Chuck watches, gets an idea.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

He begins to dig in the sand by the raft. He grabs the oar and digs faster, making a trench up to where the raft is.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

The rising tide floods water into the trench. Chuck rocks the raft back and forth. It floats! As the wave recedes, it takes the raft with it. Chuck has to run beside it.

CHUCK TRYING TO ESCAPE - MONTAGE

Over and over, we see Chuck capsize at the reef. The first time he has a bandage on his leg. He tries everything -- different rafts, different approaches, but each time the ocean spits him back.

EXT. LAGOON - DAY

Defeated and utterly exhausted, Chuck swims back from his latest failure. He wades back ashore with the FedEx box and throws it on the ground by the palm tree. He has tried so hard to escape, so incredibly hard, done everything humanly possible and beyond. He rips off his life preserver, throws it into the underbrush, then collapses on the beach.

CHUCK

You're too low in the water. Too damn low.

Chuck's shoulders begin to shake, as he is racked with deep sobs of despair.

And then he throws his head back and lets forth, from deep inside himself, a SCREAM of rage and anger and pain. The Scream pierces the indifferent natural sounds of the island, the rustling of the breeze, the lulling rhythm of the waves. It is powerful, disturbing, primal.

The breeze picks up. Behind Chuck, the palm trees begin to sway. The tide is reaching up toward the beach. The waves crash louder. The palm trees sway even more.

Chuck picks up some wet sand and rubs it on his body.

CHUCK

Dust thou art -- that's for damned sure
-- and unto dust shalt thou return.

A few DROPS OF RAIN begin to fall, splashing on Chuck and sizzling in the fire.

Chuck looks up: clouds have obscured the sun. The wind blows harder. The rain falls harder, streaking the sand Chuck had rubbed on his body. STEAM sizzles out of the fire.

Chuck looks up, disbelieving. The bottom falls out of the heavens -- monsoon rain, more rain than you have ever seen before. A long wave rolls up, its frothy fingers reaching for the fire.

Forget the raft! Forget despair! The fire could go out!
This is disaster!

CHUCK

Shit!

He springs into action. Chuck grabs an empty FedEx box. With his wooden shovel he frantically SCOOPS SOME COALS out of the fire as the rain HISSES and POUNDS at them. He slides the coals into the FedEx box, grabs some sticks of driftwood and sets off on a run.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Chuck runs through the woods, slipping and stumbling. Vines grab at him. The rain is so thick he can hardly see.

EXT. WOODS - MINUTES LATER

Chuck bursts out of the woods into the lava field. Smoke pours out of the FedEx box. The coals are about to burn through!

EXT. LAVA FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck stumbles up the slippery rocks, dragging the smoking box. His face is drenched, desperate.

EXT. CAVE - DAY - MINUTES LATER

Chuck tumbles into the cave just as the coals burn through the FedEx box.

Using the remains of the box, he desperately tries to scoot the coals into a dry spot.

One by one, THE PRECIOUS COALS GO OUT.

Dripping water off his hands and face, he pushes a few together with his fingers, ignoring the burns.

CHUCK

Please...please...please...

He stomps on the driftwood and saws at it with his knife. He places this kindling on the coals. They sputter and sizzle. Barely catch. He fans them with the box. A tiny flicker catches, then starts to grow.

CHUCK

Firewood. I need firewood.

SERIES OF SHOTS

On the beach, Chuck desperately gathers more firewood in the driving monsoon. He can barely see. Driven by the storm, the waves are licking at the palm grove.

He runs through the woods. Branches whip at his face. Roots tear at his feet, tripping him.

He stumbles up the lava field. Sliding. Struggling. Barely able to breathe, the rain is so strong.

INT. CAVE - DAY

He dumps the firewood on the floor of the cave. But where the fire had flickered, there is only a pile of wet black ashes.

THE FIRE IS OUT.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Chuck lies on the floor of the cave, shivering in the darkness as the rain falls. His fire is out, his tooth is

killing him, he can't escape.

EXT. CAVE - NEXT DAY

Chuck emerges from the cave. The rain has stopped. This is the absolute lowest. His face reflects his pain and despair. He's trapped. It's hopeless. Everything he tried to build is gone.

EXT. LEDGE - DAY

Chuck slowly walks out on the ledge. He stares down at the waves breaking on the jagged rocks far below.

He lets go one hand. Then lets go the other. He is barely balanced. It looks like a wisp of breeze would blow him right off. He slides one foot to the very lip of the precipice.

Suddenly his foot slips!

Instinctively he turns into the cliff, grabs for a hold! One hand reaches for a nubbing of rock, slips off! The other closes, his fingers straining to hold him.

He breathes in deep gasps. He had wanted to end it, come so close.

CHUCK

What the fuck are you doing?

His deepest instinct was to survive. And that is what he is going to do.

CHUCK

Hang on. Just hang on.

Slowly he pulls himself back from the edge.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Chuck walks aimlessly down the beach, feeling the burden of starting over. The beach is littered with seaweed and flotsam, bits of rope, plastic bottles. He picks up a plastic bottle. That will come in handy.

The Chuck sees a SOCCER BALL with "Wilson" stamped on it in big black letters.

He picks it up, holds it, tosses it up in the air. Then he kicks it, then kicks it again, then runs down the beach, trying to kick it and keep it out of the water. Feeling joy

again, even here.

INT. CAVE - THAT DAY

The sun is setting on his darkened cave. The soccer ball sits in the corner by the black cold ashes of what was once his fire.

Chuck carves a bit of coconut meat, takes a bite and winces as the meat hits his sore tooth. He tosses the shell on a small new pile of shells.

Chuck shakes out the last half Tylenol tablet. He puts the tablet in his mouth, then takes a sip out of his coconut canteen. When the water hits his tooth that hurts too.

INT. CAVE - MORNING

Chuck mixes a mash of breadfruit and coconut. He tries to pack the tooth with the mash, but it's so sensitive that even this hurts. He pounds the floor of the cave in frustration.

INT. CAVE - LATER

Chuck holds a stone chisel and his hammer stone. He positions the chisel against his inflamed tooth. But the thought of what he is about to do is too frightening. He lowers the chisel.

CHUCK

Shit. Shit. Shit.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Chuck tries to fill his mouth with sea water. The pain is so great his eyes water.

CHUCK

Whoo, pig. Sooeey!

He falls back in the water and floats there, looking up at the sky.

INT. CAVE - LATER

Determined, Chuck hold the stone chisel again. He raises it slowly to his mouth and picks up the hammer stone.

CHUCK

No pain, no gain.

He brings the hammer down hard on the chisel! The screen

goes BLACK as Chuck's SCREAM continues UNDER.

FADE IN:

EXT. OCEAN - SUNRISE - THREE YEARS LATER

The sky takes on the first colors of the day. The ocean is still dark, but a few waves catch the first light. The sunrise touches the summit, moves down the cliff, then lights the cove. On the screen superimpose:

"1000 DAYS LATER"

REFLECTION - WATER

A spear shimmers in the calm morning water. Attached to the spear is a man, standing completely still.

ON CHUCK

We move up out of the reflection to the real man. His legs are scarred. The remnants of a dress wrap around his middle. A stone knife on a neatly mounted haft is stuck in a belt made of videotape and woven fiber. Necklaces of shark's teeth and shells hang from his neck. His hair is long. A coconut frond hat is on his head.

The hand wrapped around the spear is scarred and brown as a berry. It holds the spear perfectly still. The watch is gone.

We come around slowly until we see Chuck's face. The eyes say it all. They stare out with a survivor's intensity, staring at the water, unblinking. This is the man who used to splash futilely about in the water trying to fish.

This is the FedEx man who was plugged into the tumult of activity and energy, surrounded by technology and human activity at its most intense, devoted to making seconds count. Now he is utterly alone, and utterly still.

And now he has all the time in the world.

Suddenly, without an ounce of wasted motion, he shoots the spear forward at a low angle. It quivers, stuck on the bottom. He pulls it out with a practiced twist. On the end is a struggling fish.

But this isn't a thrill anymore. It's another day at the office.

EXT. BEACH - LATER THAT DAY

Chuck makes a mark on a palm tree. He has completely covered three other trees with marks. It sinks in how long he has been here.

EXT. JUNGLE - LATER

Chuck carries the fish back from the beach. Now there is a well-worn trail.

INT. CAVE - THAT AFTERNOON

Chuck enters with the fish. We are greeted with the well-ordered lair of a primitive stone-age man.

Clam shell spirals weave in and out around the fire hole. Strips of eel jerky and fish hang drying from racks.

Tools are lined up neatly: digging sticks, stone hammers and saws, spears neatly hafted onto shafts, drills, awls. Bits and pieces of feathers, skins, bones, rags, leaves -- are all neatly arranged. Strings and cords hang from hooks. Coconut bowls and cooking rocks form a small kitchen. A raincoat and rain-hat woven of palm fronds is neatly draped over a frame.

Evocative pieces of driftwood decorate the room. A wind chime of obsidian flakes sways gently. The watch hangs on a stick.

The Angel Box has the place of honor on one side. On the other side the Wilson soccer ball rests on a throne of rocks. Seaweed has been placed on the ball as hair. Clam shells have been stuck on for eyes, other shells form a mouth. A tube shell and conch form a pipe.

INT. CAVE - FIRE - NIGHT

The fish are being smoke under a palm frond. Eel skins hang from sticks, roasting. Chuck sits by the fire, hafting a stone knife onto a wooden haft.

He ties some fiber to a stick, then braids it into string, using both hands and his mouth for the three strands.

He ties the string tightly around the shaft. He does his work automatically.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT - LATER

Chuck eats some fish and some mashed breadfruit. He chews each bite, his eyes in distant focus. The firelight flickers on his face.

EXT. CLIFF - SUNRISE

Chuck carries firewood up to the summit. He mechanically adds wood to the fire. As he does so, something out to sea catches his eye. He stops and stands up.

CHUCK'S POV - WHALES

WHALES broach out past the rocky point. Spouts of water shoot into the air.

ON CHUCK

As he watches them, a light comes back into his eyes. He grins. There's a big gap where his teeth had been. He turns and strides down the hill.

EXT. CLIFF - MOMENTS LATER

He heads across the rock bridge that once had so terrified him, without losing stride. It's second nature now.

INT. CAVE - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck enters the cave, picks up the ball and heads out.

EXT. SUMMIT - EVENING

The signal fire burns. A spectacular cloudy sunset lights up the sky. Chuck sits with Wilson on the summit, a bowl of mashed breadfruit in one hand, a bowl of roasted eel skin in another.

As Chuck watches the sunset unfold, watches the whales going by in the darkened water, he takes some roasted eel chips, dips them into the breadfruit paste, and offers one to Wilson. His voice is flat, monotonal.

CHUCK

Chips? Dip?

But Wilson declines.

CHUCK

No?

He takes a big crunchy bite.

CHUCK

Another fucking day in paradise.

PULL BACK as the sun goes down and Chuck reaches into the bowl again and dips an eel skin chip in the dip.

EXT. ROCKY LEDGE - NIGHT - LATER

Torch in one hand, Wilson in the other, Chuck walks across the rocky ledge. He passes the flume without even noticing.

Suddenly his shoe breaks! It's sandal made of woven yucca leaves.

He bends down and fixes it, then heads on down the ledge.

EXT. LEDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck makes a casual leap, a leap he has made hundreds of times, but this time the sandal comes loose. It catches on a rock, and CHUCK FALLS!

His hands are cut and bruised. He tries to get up, can't. Chuck sits back and examines his foot. His fingers come back covered with blood. He reaches out to steady himself, and leaves a HANDPRINT OF BLOOD on the rock.

INT. CAVE - LATER

Chuck wraps his foot in bandages.

INT. CAVE - LATER

Chuck's face is sweaty. He looks down at his foot. It is red, swollen, infected. He stands up, tries to put some weight on it. The pain is intense.

Chuck sticks the scalpel onto some coals to sterilize it. He holds it over his foot, takes a breath, then jabs in into the wound. The pain is intense. Chuck passes out.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Chuck stirs, takes a drink, weakly tosses on another log, and collapses back on the floor.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Chuck wakes up, trembling, shaking, wet with sweat. He staggers up. His shadow sways on the wall of the cave. He struggles to get another log on the fire. He squints at his only companion, the soccer ball.

CHUCK

Help me, Wilson...

He collapses again.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Chuck stirs and squints his eyes. He takes a drink of water. He is feeling better. He puts another log on the fire and slowly begins to chew on some breadfruit and dried fish.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Chuck slowly wades into the water, favoring his injured foot. But something feels different. He glances around. What is it? And then he sees something, perhaps the worst possible sight.

CHUCK'S POV - SAIL

A SAIL is moving steadily away from the island.

CHUCK

Throws down the spear and waves his arms.

CHUCK

No! Wait! Come back!

He runs into the water and starts to swim. He is so weak, however, he can only make a few strokes. He tries to yell as he swims...

CHUCK

Wait! Wait!

Choking and weak, he turns back and drags himself up on the beach. In the b.g., the sail dwindles into the distance.

EXT. SUMMIT - LATER

Chuck struggles to the top of the hill. His fire has been extinguished by the rain. In the distance, far against the horizon, he sees a sail -- or is it a cloud? The whiteness shimmers against the horizon. Chuck squints. Whatever it was, it is gone. Above him some contrails from jets mark the sky.

Furious, he kicks his signal fire, scattering the burnt-out coals.

EXT. BEACH - LATER THAT DAY

Chuck makes a new mark on his calendar tree. Then he stops.

He CUTS an angry big line under the last mark, then hacks away at the palm tree, slashing it with the stone knife, ripping and marking through all his dates. Finally the stone knife breaks in two. Chuck drops the broken half and catches his breath.

EXT. CAVE - NIGHT

Chuck enters the cave. No signal fires burn. The island is dark.

EXT. SUMMIT - DAY

Chuck stands on the summit, staring out to sea. Nothing, not even a contrail, not even a whale spout.

EXT. CLIFF - MOMENTS LATER

He is on his way down, suddenly he sees something and stops. It's the HANDPRINT, the bloody handprint, his own handprint.

He slowly extends his hand and covers it, then pulls it away. Traces it with his fingers.

INT. CAVE - DAYS LATER

Chuck has the beginnings of an artist's studio. Several large clam shells hold paint. A few egg shells are lined up. Brushes have been made from roots and feathers.

Chuck covers his hand with paint and makes a handprint on the wall of the cave. He stands back and looks at it.

INT. CAVE - DAY

He chews some berries, then holds his hand against the wall of the cave and spits a dark blue mist around it. When he takes his hand away, the silhouette of his handprint remains.

INT. CAVE - DAY

With the Angel Wing Box as a model, Chuck dips one of his feather brushes in paint, and make a tentative line on the wall of the cave. He works hesitantly, rubs off a line, tries again.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Chuck is finishing his first figure, a crude portrait of a man -- himself? Hard to tell. He examines his work. He takes some shells and sticks them on as eyes.

Chuck picks up Wilson, thinks.

CHUCK

You old airhead, you need a makeover.

He takes some charcoal out of his fire and draws eyebrows on the ball. Then, he mashes some berries, dips his fingers in the juice, and makes lips. He sticks shells on with clay for eyes. Then he looks at the face.

CHUCK

Wilson, you bad!

He sits back and regards his companion. He gestures around the cave at the new paintings.

CHUCK

What do you think?

But Wilson doesn't have an opinion.

CHUCK

You don't share much, do you?

Idly Chuck takes down the Angel Box.

CHUCK

I guess I know how Kelly felt.

For a long time he studies the wings on it. With a stick, he tries to draw a similar wing on the dusty floor of the cave. Dissatisfied, he wipes it away. He looks at the Angel Box.

Casually he reaches over and cuts it open with a stone knife. Inside he finds two bottles of green salsa. And a letter.

He reads over it.

CHUCK

You said our life was a prison. Dull. Boring. Empty. I can't begin to tell you how much that hurt. I don't want to lose you. I'm enclosing some salsa, the verde you like. Use it on your sticky rice and think of home. Then come home -- to me. We'll find the spice in our lives again. Together. I love you. Always. Bettina.

Visibly moved, Chuck puts down the letter.

CHUCK

He never got it.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

The monsoon pours down. Wind whips the palm trees. The waves are gray and angry, tearing at the beach.

INT. CAVE - DAY

As the rain pours down outside, Chuck studies the sodden, ruined photograph of Kelly, which is really only a gray mess.

CHUCK

She's probably found someone else. I would have.

Chuck dips his finger into one of the bowls of colors and streaks it slowly across his face. To exorcise his loneliness, he will paint on the most expressive canvas there is: his own body.

CHUCK PAINTING HIMSELF - MONTAGE

Close-up on scarred fingers, as they paint on Chuck's face and body. Color on skin. Tight dramatic shots of Chuck being transformed.

Chuck takes white paint and covers his hand. Then he presses it into his chest and makes a handprint. He draws a yellow spiral on his leg, then takes red and makes jagged lightning bolts on his chest on either side of the hand.

WATER

Shimmers in a gourd. Chuck's face swims into focus. It has been painted white. Looking at himself in the reflection, he dots on blue stars with dark blue from squid ink.

EXT. CAVE - LATER

The rains have stopped. The island is washed bright and green.

ON CHUCK

As he stands up in the cove. His face is white with blue stars. Handprints circle his torso, flanked by red lightning bolts. Braided cords circle his biceps. Bone necklaces hang from his neck. Feathers jut out from his hair.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Chuck goes from tree to tree, making handprints along his path. Chuck was here. This is his mark.

EXT. PALM GROVE - DAY

He covers the calendar trees with handprints. Then stops. Sees something. Eyes fixed on the beach, he walks toward the shoreline.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Chuck emerges from the palm trees, and now we see what he had seen.

A FIFTY-FIVE GALLON OIL DRUM.

And another one. TWO. Chuck stares at the barrels.

CHUCK

Hello.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Chuck sits staring at the oil drums. It's almost as if he is hesitating to take advantage of them. That he may not want, really, to leave now.

Then his inner struggle ends.

CHUCK

What the hell are you waiting for?

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Filled with determination, Chuck rolls a barrel up the beach.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Using a palm tree as a fulcrum, Chuck hauls hard on a rope made of vines, pulling the barrel up off the beach.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Chuck throws aside palm leaves, revealing...the remains of his raft.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Chuck is drawing with a purpose now. And we see what he is working on. The plans for a raft.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Chuck is making a list of what he needs. He works intently.

CHUCK

Canteens. Sea anchor. Got to weave rope. Spears. A sail.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Chuck lashes the barrels onto the raft. Checks the knots. Lashes more rope.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

He sews dresses together with handmade fiber string.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

He weaves videotape together to form a sea anchor.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Chuck digs a channel toward the raft.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Chuck constructs a water collection device with some FedEx boxes, some plastic weighted with a stone. Explains it to Wilson.

CHUCK

Now I'm hoping that if this is airtight I'll get condensation down here, a cup or so a day. If I'm careful it should be enough.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Chuck writes on the wall.

CHUCK

If I never return, know that here lived Chuck Noland for four years. I drew these paintings. I made these marks. And then I took my fate in my own hands and set forth to save myself, God willing.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Chuck loads the raft, which rocks gently in the cove. He has a sail made of designer dresses sewn together with fiber

thread. A sea anchor secured by videotape woven together into a rope. Plastic bottles filled with water. A signal kite made of FedEx paper.

Then comes the FedEx box with the angel wings. Then Wilson.

CHUCK

Wilson, my main man. Time to go.

And he gently leads the raft into the lagoon.

CHUCK

Wonder what odds Stan would give me on this. I'd say 90-10. Against.

He jumps onto the raft, begins to paddle out toward where the surf crashes onto the reef.

EXT. LAGOON - DAY

Waves break against the reef. With his paddles Chuck maneuvers the raft toward the cut in the reef. Boom! The wave crashes, the water surges through the cut, then recedes with a whoosh.

Chuck watches, times the waves, paddles like mad. He's committed. SCRAPE goes the first barrel, then the second, riding the receding wave. He's out!

But the next wave is already surging forward. It smashes the raft against the reef! Coconuts and foodstuffs hurtle off the raft!

The barrels cushion the impact. The raft tilts, spins, but stays outside the reef! The ropes holding the jugs of water break! The water sweeps overboard!

The wave recedes again. Chuck recovers, paddles with all his strength, and then he's clear of the breakers!

For a long moment he floats on the rollers, getting his breath.

The water jugs float away, carried by the waves back into the lagoon. Chuck could go back and get them. If he were being prudent, he definitely would.

But he's out. He might never get back out again.

He stares at the lagoon and the receding water jugs. Then he stares at the island. Goodbye to all that.

CHUCK

Wilson, we're out of here.

He turns and begins raising the sail.

EXT. OCEAN - WIDE - MINUTES LATER

Powered by its multicolored makeshift sail, trailing its gently flapping signal kite of FedEx paper, the raft slowly moves away from the island, out toward the open ocean.

And we pull back until the ocean swallows the tiny raft and then we TILT DOWN AND...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY - FOUR WEEKS LATER

The ocean again, low. The raft floats into frame. A trace of a breeze flaps the signal kite, which barely stays aloft, its rope frayed and tattered. The still is set up in the middle, plastic with a rock weighting down the center.

Chuck is gaunt, his clothes rotted.

He lies looking over the side of the raft, spear in one hand, staring intently at the water.

Dorados swim like specters, flashing and darting. Chuck stabs with his spear. Stabs again.

CHUCK

Slow down, damn you!

Exhausted, he sinks back to the raft. Two Dorados leap into the air ahead of him.

Chuck tries to stare again into the water. He spots another fish, a flash of silver under the surface.

Chuck struggles to his feet, raises his spear. SPLAT! Something strikes him in the chest, almost knocking him into the water.

On the raft we see flashes of silver and green and blue. A FLYING FISH. Chuck dives at it, catches it, loses it.

CHUCK

Catch it catch it catch it --

He catches it again just as it almost flops over the side.

EXT. RAFT - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck sucks the juice out of the head. He chews meat off the tiny rib bones.

Chuck is in the stage of malnutrition, vitamin deprivation, salt insufficiency, and exposure where the personality splits and becomes external. Like all castaways, he has conversations with the two sides of himself.

GOODCHUCK

Save some for tomorrow.

BADCHUCK

Catch another fish tomorrow.

BadChuck wins. Chuck keeps eating. He stares up at the sun, which beats down unmercifully.

EXT. RAFT - DAY - LATER

The raft drifts. Chuck has taken down the sail and rigged it as a canopy. Drenched with sweat, Chuck lies on the raft, trying to sleep. He dabs at some sores that are ulcerating his body and won't let him get comfortable. Plus, there's a chaffing, squeaking sound. He looks around for the source.

We see it with him. One of the ropes is frayed and about to break. If it does, the logs will come apart from the floats.

BADCHUCK

Shit! Shit! Shit!

GOODCHUCK

Stay calm, identify the problem.
Problem, rope fraying. Solution, fix rope.

BADCHUCK

With what? There's nothing to fix it with. This rope comes undone, you're going to drown.

GOOD CHUCK

Just get up and fix it.

BADCHUCK

Too tired.

GOODCHUCK

Get up.

BADCHUCK

Feels so good to lie here.

GOODCHUCK

Get up, damn you.

Chuck comes to his knees. Then sinks back down.

BADCHUCK

Can't. Need water.

GOODCHUCK

You've had today's water.

BADCHUCK

Thirsty.

GOODCHUCK

Come on, shape up, get going, you can do it.

BADCHUCK

No water, no work.

Chuck tries another tack. Sweet reason.

GOODCHUCK

Okay look, I know you're tired, I know you're thirsty, but give it one more shot, you've just got to do a little more.

BADCHUCK

Do too much, I'll die.

GOODCHUCK

Do too little you'll die.

BADCHUCK

Going to die anyway.

That stops GoodChuck for a moment.

GOODCHUCK

Okay, look have an extra swallow.

He holds up the pathetic little jar with its few teaspoons of murky water.

BADCHUCK

No more water, you said.

GOODCHUCK

Take it.

BADCHUCK

No.

GOODCHUCK

Take it, damn it.

BADCHUCK

No.

GOODCHUCK

Wilson, do you believe this? Take the damn water.

Slowly Chuck gets up, lifts up the water jar, and takes a swallow. Then another.

GOODCHUCK

Stop. Enough.

Then another.

EXT. RAFT - DAY - LATER

Chuck works to braid a new rope. He is focused, concentrating as hard as he can, but everything is slow and hard and he's weak and clumsy. He tests the rope, but it doesn't hold.

GOODCHUCK

Think. Got to use something else.

He gets an idea, starts to pull the signal kite in.

BADCHUCK

If they can't see you, what's the point?

GOODCHUCK

Survive today, that's the point.

The kite rope is much thinner than the rope he had used to tie the logs, but it's all he has. He ties the log with the kite rope. Exhausted, he lies back down.

EXT. RAFT - NIGHT

The moon is full. The waves cast off shadows on the ocean. Chuck is staring into the sky, trying to find a star to navigate by.

GOODCHUCK

Polaris, where are you? Maybe I'm too far south.

BADCHUCK

You don't know where you are. You missed the shipping lanes.

GOODCHUCK

Moon's too bright.

We hear the fraying sound again.

EXT. RAFT - DAY

Chuck saws at the outer log with his stone knife. Across the water comes a storm. We can see it like a waterfall moving toward us.

BADCHUCK

You're putting off the inevitable.

GOODCHUCK

I'm putting it off.

He looks at the deteriorating rope, at the rotting sail.

BADCHUCK

That's what's happening to you.

Chuck pushes the outer log away, then takes the loose rope and begins to lash it around the center logs.

BADCHUCK

You're rotting away.

The raft is rocking. The waves are stronger. It's hard to tie the logs together.

Rain falls like a sheet on Chuck.

BADCHUCK

Get water!

GOODCHUCK

Fix raft first.

BADCHUCK

Water water water --

Chuck works frantically in the rain, trying to tie the rope. Finally he does.

Then he scrambles for his water collecting funnel, struggles to pull it up. One corner is stuck and collapses. Desperately he rights it, pulls the funnel up.

Drops begin to run down the sides and collect in the jar. Soaked, Chuck stares at the water as it rises.

Then the rain stops.

We see the line of rain recede away from Chuck, spattering the ocean. But all around him the ocean is calm again.

And out comes the sun.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The raft floats on quiet seas. The sky is blue, with few high cirrus clouds so motionless they seem pasted on.

Chuck lies on the raft, sick and weak.

Suddenly, from the depths beside him, silently rises a huge shape.

A SPERM WHALE, still mainly submerged. The blow hole is near Chuck, wet and pulsing like giant lips. The eye of the whale is only a few feet away. It looks upon Chuck out of an intelligence deep and alien.

He slowly comes to his knees and stares at it.

The blow hole opens and WHOOSH, out shoots a geyser of fine spray which settles on Chuck in a mist.

The whale rises farther, dwarfing the raft. From the whale comes a deep sound like a foghorn.

Startled, Chuck jumps back, rocking the raft. He catches himself, slowly reaches out and touches the whale.

The whale blows again, drenching Chuck in more spray.

Chuck touches the whale again.

GOODCHUCK

You like that?

Very slowly it drifts along with the raft.

GOODCHUCK

Lost your mate?

We look right into the whale's eye. Beneath the surface we can see the huge jaws open and close.

GOODCHUCK

You're beautiful. Marry me.

BADCHUCK

You idiot, if he dives, he'll capsize the raft.

Very slowly the whale moves ahead of the raft, its vast body passing Chuck.

GOODCHUCK

No, don't go. Look, I've got fish.

Chuck rips a fillet off the line and throws it in front of the whale, which ignores it.

GOODCHUCK

Please don't dive. Please.

The whale slowly sinks, then suddenly arches its huge back and heads straight for the bottom.

For a moment, all that remains are the flukes, black and vertical against the dark blue sky. With one swoop, those flukes could destroy Chuck and his raft. But they don't do anything except slowly sink.

Then it is gone.

We are on Chuck's face as he stares at where the whale had been, the surface marked only by a ring of concentric ripples that reach out and gently rock the raft.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Chuck checks the water. It is green and full of floaties. It looks awful. He takes the jug, puts it to his mouth, and drinks. Instantly he throws up back into the jug, barely keeps from dropping it.

BADCHUCK

Look what you've done.

He dips his hand into the ocean, splashes some sea water on his face, splutters it out, then licks his lips. He is so thirsty.

He looks at the water jug, full now with his own vomit, turns

away, begins to work on the sea anchor again.

But the work makes him even thirstier. He looks at the jug again.

Picks it up. Takes a long drink.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The fish return. Chuck gets up with his spear, then puts it down.

BADCHUCK

What are you doing?

GOODCHUCK

Can't kill another one. Can't. Can't kill my friends anymore.

BADCHUCK

You fucking bleeding heart, you kill or you die.

GOODCHUCK

Why do they have to die for me?

BADCHUCK

They'd eat you if they could. They're laughing at you. Listen.

Chuck listens. Doesn't hear anything.

GOODCHUCK

Got to eat.

Chuck picks up the spear, stabs it, misses.

Suddenly he has a fish on the end of the spear. It struggles, he scoops it onto the raft, brutally pounds on its head, twists the stone knife into its spine. The struggling stops.

Chuck looks at the dead fish and begins to sob.

GOODCHUCK

I am so sorry.

He cries uncontrollably. As he cries he cuts off the head, pulls out the eyeballs, and eats each one. Then he sucks the marrow out of the head.

Then takes the heart and eats that. Then eats the liver.

As he is chewing, he cuts the meat into strips.

When he is done, he takes the backbone, breaks it, and sucks on it.

Fish scales shine in his hair, blood covers his chest.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

The raft rocks gently. Chuck looks up. The strips of fish are glowing. So is the deck where he killed the fish.

He reaches out to touch the fish strips. His hand is glowing too.

CHUCK

I'm an angel.

Suddenly he sees other lights. A ship. A ship is out there. And he hears it, a humming in deep register.

He waves his hands. He yells.

CHUCK

Here! Here!

His voice cracks, we can barely hear it over the ocean.

The lights move on.

CHUCK

No...no...no...

His raft is rocked by the wake, rocked hard. Chuck is thrown into the water!

He comes to the surface, sputtering. Where is the raft?

He looks one way, then another. Darkness.

This is the worst.

He turns again in the water. There, dimly, he can see the glow from the fish he killed. The glow saves his life.

He swims toward it.

He pulls himself back on the raft.

He lies there exhausted, the glow from the phosphorescence casting a greenish light on his face.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Clouds are building up. In the distance lightning flashes. The clouds come closer.

Little bits of electricity jump off the mast. Saint Elmos fire jumps around Chuck's hand.

Fascinated, he holds out his hand. The fire jumps from his hand to the mast.

Suddenly lightning shoots from the sky and strikes the ocean! A huge spout of water explodes like a depth charge. The CRACK is intense, then rolls away.

Chuck stares, then realizes the danger and throws himself down on the raft. Suddenly a wall of rain sweeps over him and the ocean begins to roll. The thunder is deafening. Lightning flashes bursts through the rain.

CHUCK

Sea anchor! Let out the sea anchor!

Frantic, Chuck lets out the sea anchor as the raft scuds down a huge wave. The anchor catches, slowing the raft so that it rides the wave down.

The waves come at him high as houses. The raft rides up one side, then plunges down the next.

All Chuck can do is hold on.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The storm has passed. The raft floats on big dark rollers.

We hear the chirping and squeaking of dolphins. They come close to the raft. Chuck watches them play. Then realizes they are chasing his fish. They drive them along, into the path of another dolphin, who darts in and rips into the dorado, turning the water around the raft into churning, bloody foam.

CHUCK

Stop!

He takes his oar and begins beating the water. The killing continues.

CHUCK

You fucking murderers!

Suddenly the water is still. One dolphin sticks its head out of the water and stares at Chuck, squeaking.

Another dolphin lifts its head up, then another. They squeak to each other, clearly communicating and talking about Chuck.

CHUCK

I know you're talking about me!

He splashes the water with his oar.

They dive, then jump into the air, squeaking as they go.

CHUCK

(very softly)

Take me with you.

They're gone.

CHUCK

Why me? Why me, God?

He begins to laugh.

BADCHUCK

Listen to this, Wilson.

(deep voice: God)

Because you piss me off.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Chuck tries to stretch with some simple yoga. Each movement takes forever.

He rolls over onto his stomach and tries to do a pushup. He can't. Collapses onto the raft.

BADCHUCK

You're falling apart.

Tries to do another pushup. Can't.

BADCHUCK

First you eat your fat, then you eat your muscle.

He rolls over.

BADCHUCK

Then you eat your mind.

He looks at the ocean. They're in a line of garbage, a thick slick of debris dumped off of ships.

GOODCHUCK

Roll on you deep and dark blue ocean
roll.

He closes his eyes. After a minute they come open.

GOODCHUCK

I'm late, I'm late, for a very important
date.

They slowly close again.

BADCHUCK

I'm lost. Goodbye.

GOODCHUCK

No!

His eyes come open again.

BADCHUCK

Look, just slip off the raft. The ocean
would feel so good, the water's so soft
and warm. Take a little swim. Sleep.

GOODCHUCK

You quitter you quitter you quitter.

BADCHUCK

The sea is lovely, dark and deep.

GOODCHUCK

But I have promises to keep.

(rolls over)

And miles to go before I sleep.

(props himself up)

And miles to go before I sleep.

(purpose now)

Got to fix the sea anchor. Use the sail.

BADCHUCK

Use the sail for a sea anchor and you
won't move.

GOODCHUCK

If I don't have a sea anchor I'll
capsize.

BADCHUCK

Die tomorrow or die today.

He hums Beethoven's fifth. BA BA BA BUM.

BADCHUCK

That's death knocking, knocking on your door. Crazy little woman come knocking, knocking at my front door...

GOODCHUCK

Grow up, stop being such a baby. Other people get through a lot worse.

BADCHUCK

Yeah, sure, what?

He hums to himself, begins to sing, Beatles.

BADCHUCK

I'm so tired, my mind is on the blink...

He pulls in the loose sea anchor rope, which is covered with barnacles.

He scrapes the barnacle off the rope into the water jug, then sips it.

The sun is setting, huge rays shoot out across the sky.

Out of the empty ocean the Dorados suddenly appear, leaping flashes of silver right by the raft.

One Dorado swims right by the raft, broadside.

Chuck looks at it, uncomprehending. Then slowly reaches for his spear.

GOODCHUCK

What? Are you sacrificing yourself for me?

Carefully he comes to his feet, then shoots the spear into the fish.

Flapping and struggling, it lands on the deck. Chuck pounces on it.

EXT. RAFT - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

He cuts it open. The other Dorados ram the raft in fury, like a lynch mob.

GOODCHUCK

Damn it! I had to do it!

The banging continues.

GOODCHUCK

I'm sorry!

He concentrates on his work, then sits back on his heels in amazement. There's another fish inside. He holds that fish up, stares at it, then cuts it open.

There's a smaller fish inside it.

GOODCHUCK

I know there's a moral here, God, but right now I'm just going to eat.

He pops out an eyeball, then another, and crunches them between his teeth.

He takes the heart and liver, starts to eat, then stops.

GOODCHUCK

Forgot to say grace. Sorry Mom.

He struggles to remember.

GOODCHUCK

Bless us O Lord, and these thy gifts and Christ and the bounty about to receive, or something...amen.

He eats them.

EXT. RAFT - NEXT MORNING

Chuck splashes sea water on his face. Adjusts the water still.

GOODCHUCK

Please don't leak. Please.

Chuck picks up the smallest fish. It's half digested. He washes it in the ocean, trigger fish come up and nibble at his fingers.

GOODCHUCK

Don't look at me. It was that Dorado.

He cuts the small fish and hangs it on the stays.

GOODCHUCK

You know, Wilson, every now and then we should say thank you. Thank you God.

BADCHUCK

Thank you for fucking up my life.

Suddenly something bumps the raft. Hard. Then again.

GOODCHUCK

Not again.

Fins cut the water. SHARKS. A big hammerhead bumps the raft. BadChuck hums the theme from "Jaws." Chuck takes his spear stabs at the shark.

BADCHUCK

He's going to get you, going to get you...

Another one circles in, bumps the raft.

GOODCHUCK

Get away from me!

The shark circles again, that big hammerhead like a nightmare.

GOODCHUCK

Get him get him get him.

He stabs at it with his spear. He might as well have stabbed concrete. The shark circle, Chuck stabs again.

But the shark is gone.

GOODCHUCK

Where are you? Where are you?

Stabs again and again at the empty ocean.

GOODCHUCK

Stop! You're using energy. Move slowly. Be patient.

Chuck kneels, wavering, on the raft. The ocean is calm.

Suddenly, BUMP. The raft tilts.

Chuck hangs on.

Then a shark appears, just out of spear range. Its lifeless

black eyes seem to stare right through Chuck.

If the Dorado was a gift from God, this is a message from Hell.

Then the shark is gone.

EXT. RAFT - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck lies back on the raft. He is humming.

BADCHUCK

What are you smiling about? They'll be back.

GOODCHUCK

I'm dancing on the roof of the Peabody Hotel. With Kelly.

He smiles at the thought.

GOODCHUCK

The music ends. We go back to the table. The waiters have brought dinner. New York Strip with Bordelaise Sauce. Mushrooms in brown gravy. Roasted potatoes with garlic and rosemary. Green Beans with almonds. Fresh biscuits and cornbread, dripping with butter. A nice salad with ranch dressing. A jumbo shrimp cocktail.

Thinks about that, it spoils the picture.

GOODCHUCK

No shrimp.
(then)
We eat.

He closes his eyes. This is the greatest fantasy.

GOODCHUCK

(as the waiter)

For dessert, we have pecan pie a la mode, we have a double chocolate cake with creme anglaise, we have a nice pear torte, fresh key lime pie, or perhaps if you care to wait a few minutes, a grand marnier souffle?

Chuck thinks over the options, thinking of each one.

GOODCHUCK

Why, bring them all, bring them all.

He rolls over. There, square in his vision, is a ship, its form coming in and out of a low haze.

Chuck jumps to his feet. Waves. Screams.

GOODCHUCK

Here! Over here!

The ship moves on. We can see the decks the rigging, the vastness of it.

Chuck realizes he is naked. Struggles to pull on the remains of his pants finally holds them like a diaper with one hand as he continues to wave.

On the ship no one is to be seen. It is a spooky sight.

The big tanker moves on.

We are on Chuck's face. Passed up again.

Then he realizes what is about to happen. He throws out the sea anchor.

He throws himself onto the raft and grips it as tight as he can, wiggles his feet into the ropes.

CHUCK

Oh, shiiiiittt!

Then comes the wake of the ship. It rocks the raft like a piece of flotsam. The raft rides high up on the wave, then shoots down it, but the sea anchor holds, and the raft slows and rides along with the wave.

And then the sea is calm again.

Slowly Chuck sinks to his knees. His hand lets loose his pants.

He lies down on the raft and imagines the conversation with the ship's captain.

CHUCK

Permission to come aboard, sir.

CHUCK/CAPTAIN

Permission granted.

CHUCK

May I ask, where are you bound?

CHUCK/CAPTAIN

San Francisco. And you?

CHUCK

As it happens, I'm headed for Frisco myself.

CHUCK/CAPTAIN

Would you do us the honor of joining us? We're just sitting down at mess. Pork chops and gravy, cranberries, baked potatoes with all the trimmings, fresh-baked bread, apple pie...

CHUCK

No please, join me. Some sundried fish strips, a few eyeballs, some gills to munch on.

The depression comes back again.

BADCHUCK

They're never going to see you. You're just another piece of trash in the ocean.

GOODCHUCK

They're on autopilot.

BADCHUCK

They're always on autopilot. Or else it's night, or you're in the sun, or you're in the trough of a wave. They'll never see you.

GOODCHUCK

Damn it! Don't be so negative!

Chuck picks up Wilson.

GOODCHUCK

Wilson, what's your story?

He holds Wilson close to his chest.

BADCHUCK

I float. You sink. End of story.

GOODCHUCK

I'm serious. I'm always going on about

me, me, me. Enough about me. Your turn.

BADCHUCK

It's a fucking soccer ball, you idiot.

GOODCHUCK

Shut up.

He lies on the raft and holds Wilson close.

We move up until we see --

EXT. OCEAN - AERIAL - EVENING

Chuck lying curled up on the raft, Wilson cradled in his arms, and all around the vast empty ocean.

EXT. OCEAN - NEXT MORNING

Chuck slowly wakes up. Sets Wilson aside.

GOODCHUCK

Don't shirk, don't procrastinate, don't be lazy. We're okay today. We're okay today.

And the other Chuck begins to laugh.

GOODCHUCK

Shut up.

The laughter goes on.

GOODCHUCK

Shut the fuck up! I mean it.

He stands up and checks the horizon.

GOODCHUCK

What's so damn funny?

BADCHUCK

You are.

Suddenly Chuck sees something on the horizon. A bank of clouds. A cone of -- land.

He squints, stares again. The clouds part. It looks like -- his island.

Chuck doesn't know whether to feel joy or despair.

GOODCHUCK

Jesus.

BADCHUCK

Look again, asshole. It's a mirage.

Chuck squints.

GOODCHUCK

It's real.

BADCHUCK

Nothing out there but ocean.

GOODCHUCK

Let's get a second opinion. Wilson?
What do you see?

Chuck picks up the soccer ball, holds it up, and stares out at...ocean.

EXT. RAFT - DAY - LATER

Chuck slowly writes on the sail.

CHUCK

Chuck Noland. Born October 8, 1958.
Died -- pick a date -- July 11, 1998.
And now the epitaph. Met deadlines.
Kept appointments. Lost without a trace.

He sits back, looks at the mock headstone.

BADCHUCK

What did it matter if FedEx was five minutes late one day? The next day we just start over again.

GOODCHUCK

It matters. We do the best we can, that's all we have.

BADCHUCK

Then we've just got shit.

He goes on writing.

CHUCK

I am writing this to remind myself to live a better life. If I am lost, perhaps you who find this will be instructed to live a better live

yourself. Live each day. Love your children. Don't take anyone for granted.

BADCHUCK

Is that it? Life is a fucking Disney movie?

The waves begin to grow, the ocean turns a slate gray. Far above him, great frigate birds circle. Suddenly one dives on a booby which has caught a fish. The great frigate bird swoops all around the booby until, panicked, it drops the fish, which plummets toward the sea.

With a graceful dive, the huge bird grabs the fish and then soars up on a thermal, high into the sky.

Lightning flashes back and forth across the horizon, which is turning black and dark. Thunder rolls.

EXT. RAFT - NIGHT

The raft goes up and down huge waves. Every few seconds lightning flashes, illuminating the raft and Chuck holding desperately to it, his eyes wild with fear.

EXT. RAFT - MORNING

The waves continue. Chuck holds on, his face pale.

BADCHUCK

You can't make it.

GOODCHUCK

Shut up. I don't feel like dying today.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY - LATER

The sky clears. The waves are still big. The fish are back. And then come the sharks, cutting through the water. Chuck can't get up to get his spear, he just has to watch as blood darkens the water.

And then the sharks are gone.

Chuck comes to his knees slowly, then a big wave hits. Wilson is swept into the ocean!

For a moment Chuck is uncomprehending. He watches as Wilson slowly floats away.

CHUCK

Please, no sharks.

Then he dives in to the water! Swims frantically after Wilson.

Wilson floats away from him. He swims, but he's so weak. Finally he gets to Wilson. He reaches out, but only pushes the ball farther away.

It bobs on the waves. Chuck treads water, exhausted.

Where is the raft?

CHUCK

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus.

Then he turns back the other way. The raft has drifted by him. He can go after Wilson, or he can go after the raft.

CHUCK

Shit! Wilson!

He swims toward the raft, barely moving. No matter how hard he swims, the raft seems to recede from him.

Finally he reaches it, hangs on the side, breathing hard, choking, crying.

He struggles to pull himself on board.

But he is weak, so weak. He can't do it.

Summoning some primitive reserve of strength, he tries again. This time he slides on.

He lies on the raft, panting.

Then with all his strength he pulls himself to his feet, holds on to the mast, scans the ocean for Wilson.

CHUCK

Wilson!

Nothing but waves.

This is too much. Chuck starts to cry.

EXT. RAFT - DAY - LATER

Chuck takes a swallow of water, washes it around in his mouth, then swallows. With his wet tongue he licks his cracked lips.

The sun breaks through the clouds.

With what strength he has left, Chuck raises the canopy, fastens it.

He sits in the meager shade, his head between his knees.

Closes his eyes. Just for a minute.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY - LATER

A different sort of shadow crosses Chuck's face. He opens his eyes.

There, riding right beside his raft, is a ship, a huge rusty tanker. Someone shouts down in a language we don't understand.

Chuck sits up, can't believe it. Struggles to cover himself.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY - LATER

Chuck is lifted up the rusted steel side of the boat in a Jacob's ladder.

EXT. SHIP - DAY - LATER

Chuck steps on board, can't support himself.

The crew gathers around. None of them speak English, but there is a spontaneous outburst of human connection.

One man brings some water. Another a blanket. Another some warm tea.

Chuck sits there, shivering now.

CHUCK

Thank you. Oh thank you.

Deliriously happy. Delirious.

INT. U.S. NAVAL HOSPITAL - HAWAII

A cavernous hanger-sized ward brightly lit and filled with row upon row of hospital beds, each with its table, side chair, and lamp, each with a stainless steel bedpan and neatly folded sheets and blankets stacked ready to use, and each completely empty.

Except for one.

And on that bed we see Chuck, in a blue hospital gown. An IV drips into his arm. He plays idly with the remote control of the bed. He raises the head, then the foot. He pushes another button and the knee rest bends the bed again.

A DOCTOR enters, carrying a thick chart. Chuck gives him a big manic grin. Malcolm MacDowell in "A Clockwork Orange."

CHUCK

My favorite doctor. What's the verdict?

DOCTOR

Under the circumstances your overall health is good. Those salt water boils you picked up on the raft are ulcerated, but they're healing nicely.

He checks his blood work records.

DOCTOR

Hemoglobin's 10.8 -- you're anemic, that's why we're giving you iron. Potassium's low -- we're giving you an electrolyte solution with your IV. Sodium's over 150, way too high. You may experience swelling in your extremities as you rehydrate and discharge the salt. In spite of your dietary deficiencies there's no sign of mental deterioration.

Chuck has been trying not to laugh. Now he can't stop himself.

DOCTOR

What's so funny.

Chuck can't seem to help laughing at everything.

CHUCK

Sorry...sorry... Why do my joints still ache?

DOCTOR

Dehydration. Vitamin deficiency. Protein deficiency. Any or all of the above.

CHUCK

All I ate was fish. That's solid protein.

DOCTOR

Protein digestion is very costly in water usage.

CHUCK

Which I didn't have.

DOCTOR

And fish are very low in fat, which is energy inefficient. So you're going to burn up your own cells no matter how much you eat. Luckily you ate the eyes and pancreas, which contain some Vitamin C, so you didn't get scurvy.

Chuck laughs again.

CHUCK

I am one lucky guy.

DOCTOR

Your body chemistry and your exposure to the elements would normally lead to irritability, depression, anxiety, periods of self-reproach. It's almost like schizophrenia. Different sides of your personality might come to life, speak out, act out.

CHUCK

But all that's behind me. I'm fine now.

He starts to laugh again.

DOCTOR

If you say you are.

CHUCK

I most definitely say I am.

DOCTOR

Doctor Hegel tells me he discussed the Vietnam POW syndrome with you.

Chuck stifles his laughter.

CHUCK

Yes, yes he did.

DOCTOR

You are aware of the potential disruptiveness on your loved ones when you return to your old life?

CHUCK

Not to mention on me.

The laughter again. Unsettling.

DOCTOR

You sure you don't want some counseling?

Chuck gives his biggest smile.

CHUCK

Doc, I'm not on the island. I'm not on the raft. I'm alive. I'm so glad to be back, I can't tell you. I just want out of here.

DOCTOR

Well, when that IV runs out, you're through with us. Just the dentist tomorrow.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT - LATER

Rolling his IV, Chuck walks very slowly out of the ward. Every step is an effort.

INT. PHONE CUBICLE - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

A small windowless room with only a desk and a phone, lit by a fluorescent lamp. Chuck is listening to the phone ring.

Kelly answers.

KELLY (V.O.)

Hello.

Chuck is overcome for a moment, can't say a word.

KELLY (V.O.)

Hello? Hello?

For some reason he can't keep himself from laughing. He covers the mouthpiece and laughs.

And then we hear a dial tone, harsh, mechanical, final.

EXT. PHONE CUBICLE - MINUTES LATER

We can see Chuck inside, staring at the phone.

INT. PHONE CUBICLE - MINUTES LATER

We hear a faint persistent hum. Chuck looks around, trying to locate the sound. He looks up, focuses on the fluorescent light, that background sound he can no longer tune out, then picks up the phone again.

EXT. PHONE CUBICLE

Stan answers the phone.

STAN (V.O.)

Hello?

CHUCK

Stan, it's Chuck...Chuck Noland...

The laughter again.

STAN (V.O.)

Whoever you are, you are one sick fucker.

And again we hear the dial tone.

INT. PHONE CUBICLE - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck's on the phone again.

CHUCK

Two Valium and the Rolling Stones. That ring a bell?

There's a long silence. Then we hear Stan's voice.

STAN (V.O.)

God damn! God damn! Chuck, it's you!

CHUCK

It's me.

STAN (V.O.)

You're fucking dead!

CHUCK

I'm most definitely not dead. And as I recall, you're the sick fucker.

Chuck begins to laugh, a little too loud, a little too shrill. He's on a high.

EXT. HAWAII - BEACH RESTAURANT

A terrace by the ocean. Tables filled with diners. Food

being delivered by waiters. So simple, eating. So taken for granted.

At one table sits Chuck, dressed in a Hawaiian shirt and shorts, with a half-dozen plates in front of him. He gestures to the waiter. Bring me more. It all tastes so damned good.

Behind him is the ocean. Chuck doesn't glance at it.

INT. DENTIST - NEXT DAY

An attractive DENTAL TECHNICIAN with an Australian accent cleans Chuck's teeth with an ultrasound device. She's close, very close. Chuck looks up at her. She looks really good. She smiles at him, then touches the gap where he knocked out his tooth.

TECHNICIAN

You sure you don't want to have the implant done here? We do quite good work.

Chuck shakes his head: no. She scrapes behind his front teeth.

TECHNICIAN

Hmmm, you do have such a lot of tarter behind these front incisors. A little wider, please.

Chuck opens his mouth even further. The technician talks on in the self-absorbed way dental technicians sometimes do, that constant babble of human contact which Chuck has not heard for four years.

TECHNICIAN

Anyway, so the second prosthetic foot worked better, but he still couldn't drive his new Cortina, it being a standard shift, if you follow me.

Chuck nods. I follow you.

TECHNICIAN

But would he hear of me driving him around? Not on your bloody life. Rinse please.

Chuck does. Stan bursts into the room.

STAN

Chuck! God damn!

Chuck struggles out of the chair.

STAN

God damn. God damn. God damn.

They are both almost overcome. Stan holds Chuck by the shoulders and looks at him.

STAN

You're alive, you're fucking alive!

Chuck laughs, thrilled to see Stan.

CHUCK

I beat the odds!

STAN

You beat 'em to shit, pal! Jesus!

TECHNICIAN

I still need to floss you.

Stan notices the technician.

STAN

Hello.

CHUCK

This is Amber. Her boyfriend lost his foot in a shark attack.

He says this with an absolute straight face, holding back the laughter with great effort. Instantly there's this connection again between him and Stan.

TECHNICIAN

Ex-boyfriend.

STAN

Really.

And he and Chuck make eye contact and we see a glimpse of their shared unspoken irony.

STAN

Uh, there's somebody out here who wants to see you.

Chuck stares sharply at him. Kelly? Stan nods, but there's something he wants to say.

STAN

She thought you were dead. We all did.

That's not all Stan wants to say. But Chuck is limping out the door.

INT. DENTIST - WAITING ROOM

Typical dentist waiting room. Chairs, tropical fish tanks, magazines, a few waiting patients...and Kelly, looking nervous.

Slowly and painfully Chuck enters. He's quite a sight. She stands up. There's a long moment where they look at each other.

Then she comes into his arms. Holds him tight. She's part laughing, part crying.

KELLY

I'm sorry... I'm sorry...

CHUCK

Hey...hey...it's okay!

Chuck is happy, he's still riding the high.

KELLY

You're so thin. Am I hurting you?

Well, maybe a little, but who cares? He hasn't been hugged or barely touched in so long.

CHUCK

No...no...feels good...

She disengages, looks at him with that old smile.

KELLY

Right back, you said you'd be right back.

CHUCK

A few things came up. Or went down.

He meets her gaze, looks her over with a smile.

CHUCK

You look...wonderful. I like your hair.

He notices the ring on her hand.

KELLY

I got married.

CHUCK

I thought you might have.

KELLY

I would never --

CHUCK

I know.

KELLY

If I'd known you were alive --

CHUCK

I would have done the same thing.

His responses come so quick. Chuck seems blissfully sure of himself.

KELLY

I didn't want to. It just happened. One day Gary was there. He took care of everything. He took care of me. I was a mess.

CHUCK

You have any children?

Kelly nods.

CHUCK

Got a picture?

Kelly fishes for a photo, shows it to Chuck. It's a little girl with a dog.

KELLY

Her name's Hannah.

CHUCK

Is that Jango?

KELLY

No, this is Jack. Jango was hit by a UPS truck. Can you believe it?

Chuck laughs. It is funny, sort of.

CHUCK

Life's just one big joke after another.

Stan appears, takes in the scene. The few patients waiting are edged into the corners, trying to look occupied with something else.

STAN

How about we go somewhere else?

CHUCK

Want to see my raft?

EXT. HAWAII - DAY

Chuck's raft sits up on a dock. Kelly stands staring at it. How small and fragile it looks.

STAN

This stinks really bad.

CHUCK

You should have smelled me.

Stan examines the ropes around the logs.

STAN

Cool ropes.

CHUCK

I braided them.

STAN

Must have taken a hell of a long time.

CHUCK

Time I had lots of.

Kelly points at something on the raft.

KELLY

What's that?

CHUCK

That's my sea anchor. My second one. Made it out of part of the sail. It keeps you from capsizing in a storm. In theory.

(picks up his still)

And this, this I used to collect water. About half a cup a day.

He's not feeling sorry for himself. It's just a fact.

STAN

You were how long on this?

CHUCK

Forty-three days.

They look at the tiny raft. It speaks for itself.

KELLY

All that time I waited to go on a cruise,
and you went without me.

CHUCK

Yeah, well...couldn't be helped.

Kelly notices the sail, sees the writing on it.

KELLY

What's that, written on the sail?

CHUCK

My epitaph.

Kelly reads it to herself. Her eyes are moist.

CHUCK

Bad body chemistry. Made me a little
morbid. But I'm all over that now.

And he seems really to believe it.

STAN

I'll be at the car.
(to Kelly)
Take you to the airport.

And he leaves.

KELLY

I buried you, Chuck. They had to pry my
fingers off your coffin.

This interests Chuck to no end.

CHUCK

There was a coffin?

KELLY

Yeah, coffin, headstone, the whole thing.

CHUCK

What was inside?

KELLY

Your calendar, your cell phone, your whoo pig soeey hat, some pictures of that ketch you wanted.

CHUCK

That about sums it up.

KELLY

Maybe now's when you tell me about it.

CHUCK

The plane went down. My friends died. I washed up on an island. Then I found these barrels, built the raft, and here I am.

KELLY

Yeah?

CHUCK

The tide came in, the tide went out. I survived. That's the headline. I survived.

KELLY

Don't overwhelm me with the details.
(she smiles remembering)
You know how I hate that.

He tries to put it into words, isn't quite sure how.

KELLY

(gently)
Come on. Try.

CHUCK

Cliches, mainly. Don't take anyone for granted. Don't sweat the small stuff. Live each day like it's your last.

KELLY

So simple to say, so hard to do.

CHUCK

Not when you have no choice.

Kelly looks down at the raft. It's so small.

KELLY

You hated being alone. Couldn't stand

it. Busy every minute. Always plugged into something.

CHUCK

I didn't know what really being alone was. No one back here does.

He has something more to say. She waits.

CHUCK

We're not meant to be alone. Not like that. Share life, that's what came to me out there. Be with someone.

And that's the point, isn't it? We are social animals. No man is an island.

KELLY

This is so unfair.

CHUCK

That's what I told the fish I caught. But I ate them anyway.

And the laughter comes again. Kelly grins, embarrassed, a little worried.

KELLY

You okay?

CHUCK

Great. Really.

She stares at his face, reaches out, touches it again, this time with great tenderness.

He nods, her touch feels so good.

A wave of emotion comes over her: pity? love?

KELLY

What will you do?

CHUCK

I don't know. I really don't know.

We hear a distant beep-beep, discrete as a car horn can be.

KELLY

I've got to get back to Memphis. Hannah's babysitter has finals.

CHUCK

It means a lot...that you came.

KELLY

I had to come. To be sure you were okay.

They hold each other. For a long time.

KELLY

I love you, Chuck.

CHUCK

You too.

KELLY

I'm so glad you're alive.

Chuck grins.

CHUCK

You too.

Then she heads for the waiting car. Chuck stands by his raft, watching her go.

INT. FEDEX PLANE - NIGHT

Chuck and Stan ride on the plane. Chuck is coming down off his survival high. He has the Angel Wing FedEx package with him.

STAN

When I first showed up, I thought you'd lost your fucking marbles.

CHUCK

I never thought it would end. Then it did. It was so great to be saved, I couldn't stop laughing.

Stan pulls a flask out of his bag.

STAN

You need a drink.

Stan takes two glasses from his bag, rests them on a FedEx container, and pours the whiskey.

CHUCK

For years my only drinking buddy was a soccer ball. Wilson.

Stan hoists his glass.

STAN

To Wilson.

CHUCK

To Wilson.

Now's when Stan gets to the question he's been wanting to ask, that Kelly wanted to know, that we all want to know.

STAN

So, what's it all about?

Chuck stares at him.

STAN

You've been over the line and you came back. You've been saved, hallelujah!

CHUCK

Hallelujah.

Stan looks over at him.

STAN

I'm serious. The burning bush, the big picture, the words in neon...

CHUCK

What's it all about? It's about being so thirsty you'd crush a fish's backbone to suck out the spinal fluid -- that's what it's about.

Stan sits back, repulsed but relieved.

STAN

Do what it takes. That's what I always told you.

He pours another drink.

STAN

To life. Fuck 'em if they can't take a joke.

CHUCK

To life.

STAN

That's all there is.

CHUCK

Believe me I know.

He takes a sip of his drink, just savoring it, thinking.

CHUCK

But it's not being bold or being in the game or rolling the dice.

All those things Stan used to tell him.

CHUCK

When I was going crazy, on the raft, I'd argue with myself about everything. Because everything had a price. To get anything -- a sip of water, a little corner of shade, an hour's sleep -- I had to let go of something else. And then I could never get it back.

He thinks some more.

CHUCK

You don't win or lose. You win and lose.

He looks out the window.

CHUCK

You win and lose.

And Chuck has. Big time.

EXT. MEMPHIS AIRPORT - NIGHT

A FedEx MD-11 lands.

EXT. MEMPHIS SUPERHUB - MOMENTS LATER

The MD-11 taxis up. As usual, the SuperHub is a frenzy of activity. A loading crew stands ready, forklifts poised. Even this plane carries packages.

PHIL STEELE, the chairman of FedEx, Leslie, Becca, Dick, and other executives wait on a special podium near the gangway. Everyone looks different -- older, a mustache here, a thickening around the belly there.

Behind a barrier a cluster of cameras film the scene.

The plane cuts its engine. The stairs are rolled out. Forklifts and gangways move forward. Cargo doors open.

Chuck appears in the door. He holds the FedEx Package and a small travel bag.

Chuck blinks against the lights and the glare. Stan is right by him. Everyone bursts into APPLAUSE AND CHEERING.

After four years of total solitude this is completely overwhelming.

STAN

Smile.

Chuck smiles.

STAN

Wave.

And Chuck waves. He's overwhelmed by all the input. Stan steers Chuck down the steps as the cheers continue.

At the bottom of the steps Roger steps forward. The two brothers embrace each other. After a moment Roger disengages. Mary gives Chuck a hug.

MARY

Oh Chuck --

CHUCK

Where's Mom?

ROGER

Waiting for you. At the farm. This was too much --

He looks around at the crowds.

CHUCK

Tell me about it.

Stan nudges Chuck. Time to go to the podium.

ROGER

Glad you made it, big brother.

Stan and Chuck head for the podium. All the loaders and operators and package scanners begin to applaud. Chuck smiles, then laughs, getting into the emotion. He keeps up an almost indecipherable babble underneath the cheering. Occasionally he sees someone he knows.

CHUCK

Wow. Thank you. Great. Thank you.

Hey, Rasheed, how you doing? Thank you all.

EXT. SUPERHUB - WIDE

Chuck makes his triumphant way through this amazing collection of cheering people like Moses parting the Red Sea.

EXT. SUPERHUB - PLATFORM

With a big smile Phil Steele holds out his hand to Chuck.

STEELE

Welcome home.

He steps to the microphone and addresses the SuperHub.

STEELE

This is an extraordinary moment. And it should be marked in an extraordinary way. With something we have never done since this company was founded.

(pause)

Stop the line!

EXT. SUPERHUB - SERIES OF SHOTS

All over the SuperHub, belts come to a halt. Forklifts stop. Tracking stations shut down. The vast flow of packages is suddenly still. The incredible din of activity is suddenly quiet. The stillness and the silence are unexpected and palpable. Thousands of workers stop as well, staring either up at Chuck directly or at his image on video screens. We hear Phil's voice piped in.

EXT. SUPERHUB - PLATFORM

Phil holds a plaque.

STEELE

Four years ago we placed this plaque in honor of Charles Noland, and two just like it in honor of Al Morris and John Durham, the two brave pilots who went down with him.

As he talks, we stay on Chuck, who is taking in this amazing scene, not really listening.

STEELE

Chuck endured years of hardship and loneliness. Like Lazarus, Chuck has come

back from the dead. Chuck, this is your family, all of us. So it gives me great pleasure...to take this plaque...and to present it to our long lost son. Welcome home.

He hands the plaque to Chuck. Chuck acknowledges the cheers of the crowd.

CHUCK

Thank you. Thank you very much...

Everyone applauds.

CHUCK

Give me a minute. I've spent four years looking out at an empty ocean.

He laughs, a short brittle laugh, composes himself.

CHUCK

It's all so -- big. You never think you'll miss -- all this. But I did. I really, really did. And I missed all of you.

He looks over at the hub.

CHUCK

You've added some new belts, and what's that?

He points at some high tech equipment on the edge of the shed.

STAN

Digital laser readers.

CHUCK

Digital laser readers. Wow. Terrific.

He looks around at everyone, doesn't know what else to say.

CHUCK

I've never heard it this quiet. Shouldn't you all be getting back to work?

The tension is broken. Everyone laughs. Phil Steele motions with his hand. Let it be done.

ANOTHER ANGLE - WIDE

The vast, incredible machinery creaks to a start. Everyone shakes Chuck's hand as he leaves the podium.

As he heads for the car, REPORTERS shout questions.

INT. CAR - MEMPHIS FREEWAY

We are assaulted by a surge of light, motion, activity. Snaking lines of traffic in both directions, big overpasses, the city rising beyond.

Stan drives with a certain aggressiveness. Chuck looks out at the traffic, at all the activity, at the vast intricate anthill of humanity going everywhere and nowhere.

CHUCK

Take your time.

STAN

What?

CHUCK

That's what it's about.

STAN

Being patient. Don't rush things. I get it.

He swerves into another lane.

CHUCK

Not just that. Take your time. Use it. Live it.

STAN

Deep, real deep.

He grins, cuts across to the exit.

STAN

So where to? The office? The hotel?
The beach?

Chuck stares at him. Are you kidding?

STAN

What, then?

CHUCK

Deliver this package. Then, I dunno.

STAN

(re: the package)
You want that delivered, we'll deliver
it. That's what we do.

CHUCK

I need to do it.

STAN

Finish what you started. You haven't
changed, Chuck. It's still you.

Right.

CHUCK

You want to help, help me find the woman
who sent this.

INT. OPERATIONS CENTER - DAY

Stan and Chuck are in the office of a TECHNICIAN who is
working away at his computer. The Technician pulls the bar
code from the Angel Wing FedEx box up on his computer screen.

TECHNICIAN

Okay. After three years the PTR reverts
to tape storage, which is okay because we
access it through the CPC. Here it is.

(gestures at computer map)

Ten packages from the same sender. Baku.
Delhi. St. Petersburg. The guy was a
real road warrior. This package was
Kuala Lumpur. No activity in his account
after this package. No forwarding
addresses after K.L.

CHUCK

What about the sender?

TECHNICIAN

Sure. Bettina Peterson. Marfa, Texas.
Let's run a current check.

He works some keys, waits.

TECHNICIAN

Hmmm. Durango, Colorado; Asheville,
North Carolina, then...canceled her
account.

CHUCK

Can you find her?

TECHNICIAN

You're looking at a Level III search.
For your Level III, you gotta have E-4
authorization. I don't have it.

STAN

I do.

He holds out a badge.

TECHNICIAN

Okay, let's let it rip.

He starts to pull up the data.

CHUCK

Thanks. For everything.

STAN

No sweat.

EXT. CHUCK'S MOTEL - THAT NIGHT

Chuck leaves the motel, the Angel Box under his arm. He ties it into a pannier on the side of a bicycle.

EXT. MEMPHIS - CHICKASAW GARDENS - NIGHT

Chuck sneaks up to a craftsman cottage and stands by a tree with a swing on it. Inside we see Kelly making dinner for her husband, who plays with their daughter. For a moment Chuck watches through the window, and we watch with him. Then the dog begins to bark.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Chuck walks through the cemetery late at night. He comes to his gravestone, stares for a long moment at the inscription, then takes out a spray can of paint and puts a HANDPRINT on it.

He gets back on his bicycle and rides away.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Chuck rides his bicycle down a road leading into the South.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

Chuck negotiates an overpass crossing an Interstate Highway. Headed in both directions, cars whoosh by beneath him.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK - LATER

Chuck rides down a narrow road, shrouded in mist. Moss drips from the trees reaching over the road. A car goes by. Then another, their lights like halos in the fog. It's a mystical scene, a passage.

EXT. ARKANSAS - NIGHT

Chuck gets off his bicycle in the rain and walks toward a roadside cafe.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Chuck draws on a paper place mat as he waits for his meal at a counter. Above the counter the television plays.

ANNOUNCER

And here's more from Dingo Dodd, our Australian correspondent, on the extraordinary story of Chuck Noland, the modern Robinson Crusoe.

The waitress sets a plate down in front of Chuck, turns to watch.

On the TV we see an Australian correspondent standing on Chuck's beach.

DINGO DODD

Shark infested waters! A deserted island! Surrounded by reefs! Accessible only by helicopter! For four years Chuck Noland survived here alone, eating fish, coconuts and clams, his only companion a soccer ball.

Chuck is staring at the screen, seeing his cave, seeing all those years.

DINGO DODD

I'm now in Chuck's cave where he passed the lonely nights, painting on the walls like some prehistoric caveman. What did Chuck feel? These paintings tell the story, but only Chuck knows what they mean. And he's not talking.

On the screen we see a photograph of Chuck.

The waitress looks over at Chuck. The other clients look at

him too.

CHUCK

Check, please.

The waitress comes over.

WAITRESS

No charge, honey. But could you just sign that place mat for me?

Chuck looks down at his doodling. Hesitates. Then signs his name.

INT. TYSON'S CHICKEN - ARKANSAS - DAY

Thousands of chicken carcasses hanging on hooks circle through the huge processing plant, a vast structure on the scale of the SuperHub or the Hospital.

Chuck's Mom, dressed in white with a hairnet, enters a windowed office in the b.g. Through the window we see her hug Chuck.

INT. TYSON'S CHICKEN - OFFICE - ARKANSAS - DAY

We are in the office now. Chuck's Mom's eyes are moist.

CHUCK

When'd you start working here?

MOM

Roger got me on. I wasn't doing anything, and -- but you're back, you're really back. I would have come to Memphis, but --

CHUCK

I wanted to come here.

INT. FRAME HOUSE - ARKANSAS - DAY

Chuck eats a Southern fried drumstick. The table is full of home-cooked food.

MOM

Have some more potato salad.

Chuck gestures, no, I'm full. She puts down the spoon.

CHUCK

That was great, Mom, just great.

He looks around the house, everything in its place. His mother has been here for forty years. There's a big crack running down from the ceiling.

CHUCK

I've got all this back pay coming. Why don't you let me get you a place in town?

MOM

This is my home. I'm part of the wallpaper.

She studies him for a moment.

MOM

You miss it, don't you? You miss that island.

He does, but that's not it entirely.

CHUCK

Miss that island? Mom, come on.

She looks at him. She knows her boy.

MOM

What a journey you've had. It seems more than a person should have to bear.

CHUCK

The tide saved me, Mom. I lived by it. I'm just wondering where it will take me next.

She looks at him, thinks about this.

MOM

Remember the family motto. In time. It will come to you, in time.

EXT. ARKANSAS - DAY

Chuck rides away from the small neat frame house, down a country lane with trailers up on blocks.

EXT. GULF COAST - DAY

Chuck leaves a cheap motel as the sun comes up.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST - DAY - LATER

Chuck rides on a ferry, the wind blowing his face. The sky is gray and drizzly. He smells the salt water. Watches the waves.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Chuck asks for directions. A kid in baggy pants and no shirt points him down the road.

EXT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck pulls some clothes out of his saddle bags.

EXT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck emerges from the restroom wearing a FedEx shirt and shorts.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - HOUR LATER

A classic beach house. Sand dunes, stilts. Carrying the Angel Wing Box under his arm, Chuck checks the address in his hand. Mounts the steps. A light mist falls. You can see the Gulf behind the house, gray and moody.

A WOMAN, BETTINA, answers the door -- THE woman from the beginning. She wears cut-off jeans and a blue work shirt covered with paint. There's a tattoo on her ankle.

CHUCK

FedEx for Bettina Peterson.

The woman stares in disbelief at the package she hasn't seen in years and never expected to see again.

BETTINA

Where did you get that?

Chuck displays a FedEx badge.

CHUCK

Charles Noland. FedEx Special Projects.

Bettina notices Chuck's bicycle.

BETTINA

You came on a bicycle? No wonder it's so late.

CHUCK

There was an unavoidable delay.

Bettina stares at the package, her own memories coming back.

BETTINA

Well, I have to say, I'm impressed. You never gave up.

CHUCK

No.

She holds the box and studies him for a long moment. Something -- the look on his face, the extraordinary reappearance of this long-lost package -- makes her curious.

BETTINA

You know what happened to this?

CHUCK

As much as anybody.

BETTINA

Want to come in? Get dry for a minute.

CHUCK

Okay. Sure.

She lets Chuck in the door.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Ladders. Scaffolds. Huge paintings are everywhere. Paintings of wings and angels -- like the package. Chuck stares at them. Bettina watches Chuck stare.

BETTINA

I've got some coffee on. Would you like some?

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Bettina pours some coffee. The package sits in the counter. Some magazines are spread around, including a People Magazine with Chuck's photograph on the cover.

CHUCK

(takes a sip)

It's good.

They smile awkwardly at each other. She starts to open it.

BETTINA

Hmmm. Feels like it might have gotten wet.

CHUCK

Possible. So you did those wings?

BETTINA

Yeah. A long time ago.

CHUCK

They're harder to do than they look.

BETTINA

Oh? You've tried?

CHUCK

Well, I do a little drawing --

She's opened the package. She pulls out the bottles of salsa and the letter.

CHUCK

Our apologies that it never made it to the recipient.

BETTINA

He was a sorry sonofabitch, and I'm sorry I ever married him.

There is a moment where neither knows what to say.

BETTINA

You look familiar.

Her eyes start to register recognition. She glances at the magazine with Chuck's picture on it. She picks it up.

BETTINA

I can't believe this. I -- I -- They are... You're a gifted artist. You're into something very powerful. Primal. Truly.

CHUCK

Well, not really, I --

BETTINA

You are. Yes you are.

(so many things she wants to say)

What gave you the idea to paint on that cave?

Chuck thinks about that. After a moment, he grins.

CHUCK

To tell you the truth -- you did.

BETTINA

Do you...have any more packages to deliver?

CHUCK

No. that was the last one.

BETTINA

Just sit here, I'll get us some lunch.

Chuck sits back on the couch, taking in the sight of the ocean in the light rain. He looks over at all the canvases, the easel, the palettes. The wind rustles the palm trees around the house. The surf crashes and rustles. Familiar sounds. Island sounds.

He relaxes a little. Maybe the package with the wings was a sign, he kept it all these years precisely for this. Then there's a sound of a truck in the driveway.

The engine cuts off. There are steps on the porch. The door opens. A tanned muscular MAN in neatly kept work clothes comes in, hangs a tool belt on a hook by the door.

He looks at Chuck with a relaxed, even stare, as if seeing a man in a FedEx uniform sitting on his couch is not an unusual occurrence.

MAN

Hey.

CHUCK

Hey.

BETTINA (O.S.)

In here!

The Man nods at Chuck, goes into the kitchen. We are on Chuck's face. Who's this? We hear muffled laughter from inside.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - HOUR LATER

Arms around each other, the Man and the Woman say goodbye to Chuck. In the front yard is a panel truck painted with two angel wings. The Man grins at Chuck, an easy, friendly grin.

MAN

Come back anytime. Coffee's always on.
Don't even have to bring us a package.

CHUCK

That was my last one.

Bettina hands Chuck a sheet of paper.

BETTINA

The list of paints and brushes I did for
you.

He takes it, not exactly sure he wants it.

BETTINA

Keep painting. Promise me.

CHUCK

Sure.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck rides his bicycle away, along the shore.

EXT. BEACH - MINUTES LATER

Chuck rides along the beach. Up ahead we see a FedEx truck.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck gets off his bike as a female FEDEX DRIVER puts chocks
under the wheels, which have stuck in the sand.

CHUCK

Need some help?

DRIVER

You bet I do. High tide comes right up
to this road.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck pushes on the truck as the driver gives it gas. The
truck slowly pulls back onto the pavement.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

The Driver gets out of the truck with a grin. She has an
open, friendly face. There's an instant connection between
them.

DRIVER

Hey, thanks. I'd never have got that out by myself.

Looks at his uniform. At the bike.

DRIVER

You're not out of Pascagoula, are you?

CHUCK

No.

Where is he from, anyway?

CHUCK

I used to drive one of those. A long time ago.

DRIVER

Hey, once a driver, always a driver. You want a lift? I've just got one more pickup.

CHUCK

Sure.

He picks up his bike.

INT. FEDEX TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

The FedEx truck makes its way down the beach, Chuck in his uniform, the Driver in hers. Two FedEx people in a truck. The Driver looks over at Chuck.

DRIVER

You're Chuck Noland.

CHUCK

Yeah.

DRIVER/ERICA

I knew it! You're a legend! Mr. Robinson Crusoe.

CHUCK

Well --

ERICA

I knew I recognized you. My name's Erica.

They smile at each other. Then she smiles a little more.

ERICA

Did you really steal a crippled kid's bicycle to make your deliveries, or is that just some bullshit story?

CHUCK

I didn't steal it, and he wasn't crippled.

Erica laughs.

ERICA

Otherwise it's completely true.

And that makes Chuck laugh, really laugh, for the first time.

CHUCK

Yeah, completely.

She looks over at him with a grin.

ERICA

What brings you out to the sticks?

CHUCK

Had a package to deliver.

ERICA

You? Personally?

CHUCK

I had it on the island with me.

ERICA

Must be a story there.

There's a connection building here, effortlessly.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

We are wide on the beach, watching the truck move along the water, kicking up wisps of sand.

CHUCK (V.O.)

Yeah, a long one.

ERICA (V.O.)

I've got lots of time.

CHUCK (V.O.)

So do I.

The truck goes down the beach and then turns inland, away from the ocean. Away from all that.

CHUCK (V.O.)

So do I.

And we pull back, taking in the sweep of the beach, the estuaries, and the green forest stretching back into America.

The end is the beginning.

FADE OUT.