

# 127 HOURS

SCREENPLAY BY  
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# 127 HOURS

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Screenplay by Danny Boyle & Simon Beaufoy  
Based on: ***Between a Rock and a Hard Place*** by Aron Ralston

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1 EXT. CROWD SCENES. TRIPTYCHS.

1

Black. A roaring, like the sea crashing against the shore, growing louder.

**The screen is split into three vertical panels. A triptych.**

Sometimes the scenes on the panels will be different, sometimes repeated images and sometimes the panels will merge into one screen. But always, the theme is the crowd, people, humanity, us.

The panels explode with people as a Mexican wave erupts in a football stadium. Tens of thousands of fans rise and fall around the arena.

More crowds; thousands and thousands of baseball fans rise as one to their feet, roaring their approval at an unseen strike.

An army of adoring music fans stretch their yearning hands towards an unseen singer on stage.

Even more crowds fill the panels. The throng of a million pilgrims at the Kumbh Mela, a flash mob in Victoria Station, a crowded dealing floor at the stock market, a million Catholics in St Peter's Square...

2 INT. ARON'S HOUSE. BEDROOM/ HALL/ LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

2

Mixed into the triptychs of endless humanity, a lone shadow crosses one of the panels. We are in a bedroom that could belong to a student. Then, a phone rings. Shocking in this silent world. The camera stops then moves through the house, the camera our POV.

The camera stops in the doorway of the living room where the phone is ringing. Eventually, the answer-phone clicks in.

PHONE

Hi, Aron here! Leave a message.

Business-like. We can't get any kind of a fix on Aron's personality from this.

PHONE (CONT'D)

Hey, Aron, Sonja here. Again. I know you're probably gonna be away this weekend but listen think about what we're gonna play. Please, because we have to decide and practice. It will be fun, I promise. Oh, and please call Mom, she'll be worried. Later, A. Bye!

The phone rings off, leaving nothing but a flashing red light in the dark room. The camera moves back down the hall into the bedroom again. We are its eyes.

3 INT. ARON'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

3

Then a hand reaches high and opens a cupboard door. Picks up a mini cam-corder off a high shelf. Drops it in a back-pack. Reaches in again, gets a climbing harness. The jingle of carabiners. The hand clips a descender onto a loop on the harness. A Camelbak pouch of water, another water bottle. All drop in the rucksack.

The hand gropes blindly around the high shelf. Looking for something else, something out of sight. We see a Swiss Army Knife at the back of the shelf. His hand skims past it a couple of times, millimeters away. Misses it.

Clearly giving up on this, the hand picks up a coil of climbing rope, moves into another room. We move with the hand, not seeing the person, just his efficient intent.

4 INT. ARON'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

4

Cluttered surfaces. The hand reaches up, grabs a burrito wrapped in a transparent sandwich bag, goes into a cupboard and takes three energy bars, a bottle of Gatorade. The hand shuts the cupboard, skims the messy surface, picks up a grapefruit on the way past and moves towards the door. We hear a door shut. A key turn. The sound of a truck door opening and shutting. An engine starts with a roar.

5 INT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT.

5

We are inside a 98 red Toyota Tacoma with a topper. It drives down the silent Aspen Main Street. From the point of view of the driver, we look to left and right, see the security lights from various shop fronts, the empty streets. Still, we do not see the driver.

6 EXT. ROAD. NIGHT.

6

The only vehicle on the road, the Toyota turns off the Main Street and heads into the dark.

- 7 INT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 7
- A hand slips a CD into the truck's player. Music booms out.
- For the first time, we see the owner of the truck: Aron Ralston, 27. We study his face for clues. Fit, tanned by the wind, not the beach. Not giving much away.
- The screen splits into two and then three, though at times there appears to be no division at all.
- 8 A title card reads: 8
- "Utah. The Canyonlands. The slickrock desert. The red dust and the burnt cliffs and the lonely sky - all that which lies beyond the end of the roads."
- Edward Abbey. Desert Solitaire.
- 9 EXT. ROAD. NIGHT. 9
- Aron's truck drives alone on the interstate road.
- 10 EXT. VARIOUS COMMERCIALS FOOTAGE. 10
- Billboards, TV, cinema, www: commercial America sells everything to us through every means. As many brand names as we can get.
- 11 INT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 11
- At the south-west edge of Green River, Aron drives under the interstate into a landscape of obscurity. He looks to his right and left. Not a single light perforates the absolute blackness of the San Rafael Desert.
- 12 EXT. CITY. FREEWAY. NIGHT. 12
- Overhead shot of a busy city freeway at night. The speeded up headlights blurring into a thousand strings of shimmering luminescence.
- 13 EXT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 13
- Three quarters of the screen is black. All we see are truck lights running parallel with the darkness.
- 14 INT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 14
- Out of the black, a sign rears up. *Next Service 110 miles.*

- 15 EXT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 15  
America's challengers for the Tour de France flash by: a pack of 15 or so neon spirits. Night training.
- C/U: watch.
- A huge close-up of a sports watch. One of those chunky ones with both analogue watch hands and a digital cut-in. The minute hand makes a loud click as it hits the top of its arc. 10PM.
- 16 EXT. ROAD. NIGHT. 16  
A BLM sign indicates that Horseshoe Canyon Trailhead is 47 miles ahead through the desert darkness.
- 17 EXT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 17  
The truck skids to a halt. Turns a sharp left down the trail and bumps into the darkness.
- 18 INT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 18  
Aron's whole upper body is pumping along to the music. Another bright yellow sign flashes past. *DANGER: FLASH FLOODS.*
- 19 EXT. CANYON-SIDE. NIGHT. 19  
We are high above the road by a canyon wall, a massive slice of smooth rock on the edge of frame. On this rock are painted a series of petroglyphs and pictographs carved and painted into the rock by ancient civilisations.
- The carved images materialise on different parts of the triptych: superhumans hovering 8 feet high over groups of indistinct animals, their long dark bodies and huge eyes more extra-terrestrial than human.
- 20 EXT. DESERT. NIGHT. 20  
Tyres rushing across the desert grooves, pulling, snatching, hard left and right. The rear of the truck fish-tails madly.
- 21 INT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 21  
Everything in the truck is bouncing up and down crazily. All except the bike, locked down in the back of the truck, braced solid. Suddenly, a small brown sign flashes past.

ARON.

Woah.

He kicks down on the brakes.

22 EXT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 22

The truck skids to a halt.

23 INT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 23

ARON.  
Nearly missed it!

Aron leans over to the rucksack on the passenger seat. Gets out a small video camera and **films the sign**. The sign reads "HORSESHOE CANYON".

*VIDEO POV- we see the sign, shakily filmed, as with a roar the truck starts up again.*

Still driving, now with one hand, Aron flicks on the interior light. Turns down the music. Turns the camera round on himself.

*VIDEO POV*

ARON. (CONT'D)  
*Friday night, April 25th, two thousand  
and three. Heading for Bluejohn Canyon.  
Just me, the music and a whole lot of  
night ahead. Love it.*

He throws the video camera into the top of the back-pack, turns up the music to ear bleed level.

24 Ext. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 24

From high up we see the truck take a sharp left, the headlights barely penetrate the dark.

25 INT/EXT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 25

Jackrabbits dart onto the road, racing him, darting left and right as he chases them down. They dart away into the black.

25A EXT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 25A

The truck's headlights pick out three other vehicles and two encampments at the Trailhead.

26 INT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 26

Aron turns off the music. Ejects the CD. Bangs open the glove-box and flings the CD inside. Shuts the glove box.

The camera watches the plastic glove box for a longer moment than seems necessary. Then, Aron's hand comes back in, reaches inside, roots around and gets out a multi-tool hidden at the back. Slams the glove box again.

27 EXT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 27

Aron gets out of the truck, expecting a head to pop out of a tent. But silence. Stillness. Ghostly. He goes round to the back of the truck, opens the doors.

28 INT. BACK OF ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 28

Aron flings everything out of the way of his mat, clambers in the back of the truck. The doors shut on the night.

**END OF TRIPTYCH TITLE SEQUENCE.**

Above the truck, unseen by Aron, the faint, pre-history trace of a shooting star flashes across the dark sky. Then, black.

C/U watch.

The sports watch in massive close up.

The edge of a finger presses a button on the side. The stop-watch hands ticks into life.

29 INT. BACK OF ARON'S TRUCK. DAY. 29

The doors smash open to reveal blistering sun. Aron's bike careers into it. We see the spectacular desert scenery for the first time. Endless pink sands, painful blue sky.

30 EXT. DESERT. DAY. 30

*VIDEO POV*

*The video camera is mounted on the handlebars, pointing up at Aron's face as he rides across the desert, jolting, skidding, huge amounts of video drop-out and electronic chaos. But despite all that, there's Aron's face, loving every moment of it.*

ARON

*Blue John Canyon. Guidebook time to the drop-in, two and a half hours. Aiming to take 45 minutes off that. Yee-hahhhh!*



And with an adrenaline yell, he tips down a suicidal slope at speed. He wears a bandana across his mouth to keep out the dust, an old Phish t-shirt and lycra bike shorts. He is an advert for extreme sports, the smile on his face and the complete control over his bike telling us all we need to know.

31 EXT. DESERT. DAY.

31

Even uphill, Aron is hammering his way up the sandstone. Gasping for oxygen, his legs screaming for rest, he pushes and pushes until he crests the ridge. His mouth sucks on the tube from his Camelbak rehydration system - a bladder of water in his back-pack.

Big C/U.

Huge in camera, we see the air bubbles and the water being sucked towards his parched mouth.

ARON  
(utter delight.)  
Ahhh.

God, that's good. But no rest. He is off again, down, down the steep slope, controlled skids dodging the boulders, an extreme sports junkie at the top of his game - until....

32 EXT. DESERT. DAY.

32

Suddenly, his front wheel hits a sand trap. He is hurled forwards over the handle bars, face first into the sand. His toe-clips and his momentum bring the whole bike with him. The bike has him trapped on the desert floor like a wrestling take-down.

He sits up, looks around quickly to see if anyone saw - then bursts out laughing. Pulls out his stills camera from his bag and takes a a self-portrait snap of the mess.

Aron checks the time. He is up, back on the bike and away, not in the least deterred by his crash. He is unstoppable.

33 EXT. DESERT. DAY.

33

At what seems like the only tree for miles, he U-locks his bike in the shade, pockets the keys, and jogs off into the desert, scoffing a muffin as he goes.

34 EXT. APPROACH TO BLUE JOHN CANYON. DAY.

34

Aron is bum-sliding down a steep slab. Lands neatly on his feet at the bottom. Then stops dead. As if the film has frozen. Voices. Girls' voices. A giggle. Definitely a giggle. Aron listens. Checks his watch.

C/U: watch.

The huge second hand sweeps by.

35 EXT. DESERT. DAY.

35

Looks towards the canyon. Looks towards the direction of the giggle.

Aron climbs up the other side of the slope.

36 EXT. APPROACH TO BLUE JOHN CANYON. DAY.

36

Aron looks down on two girls in their early twenties, staring at a map. Kristi and Megan.

ARON

Hey.

They squint up at him haloed by the sun. They both look surprised. You really don't meet other people out here. They can barely see him, whited out by sun, just an outline of human. He scrambles down towards them. Lands as neatly as an acrobat right next to them. As far as they are concerned, he's just landed from outer space. They take a step back.

MEGAN

Woah...

ARON

Hi. You doing Blue John Canyon, too?

KRISTI

Err, no, we're headed for The Dome.

ARON

Yeah?

KRISTI

But I think we're-

MEGAN

- you're -

KRISTI

Seeing as I'm today's designated map-reader, *I'm...* lost.

ARON

Okay, well, no problem. You're... here.

He points to the map.

KRISTI

We are? (pretending to be in control)  
Sure we are. I knew that.

Aron laughs.

ARON

And The Dome is here.

KRISTI

Oh.

ARON

Easy to miss the turn off.

KRISTI

No kidding. Err, hi, by the way.

ARON

Hi. I'll take you back up there if you like.

The girls look at each other. Don't know how to break it to him. Then he gets it.

ARON (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry. The Friday the 13th, Child-Killer look.

He struggles with the bandana around his mouth.

ARON (CONT'D)

I'm really only a psychopath on weekdays. And as it's Saturday...

He takes the bandana off with a flourish. Shrugs as if that's the best he can do with the materials available.

ARON (CONT'D)

I can't take this one off. It's my face.

Kristi and Megan laugh. Aron laughs. Ice broken. He sticks out his hand, extremely formal.

ARON (CONT'D)

Aron.

Kristi sticks hers out, equally formal.

KRISTI

Kristi. Allow me to introduce you to my friend, Megan.

MEGAN

Pleasure to meet you, Mister Aron.

ARON

An honor.

And they shake too. And all laugh.

ARON (CONT'D)

So, you're lost. And I'm a guide.

He looks at them, expectantly.

ARON (CONT'D)

I'm good.

The girls look at each other.

MEGAN

Sure. Why not.

Aron checks his watch. Puts his hand to it.

C/U WATCH.

Huge on the watch. With a click, the sweeping second hand comes to a stop.

37

EXT. DESERT. DAY.

37

From high on the edge of the canyon we look down on the three figures hiking their way along the bottom.

MEGAN

You biked from Horseshoe? That's twenty miles or more.

ARON

Seventeen on the odometer.

MEGAN

(teasing)

Not seventeen and a half?

ARON

Seventeen point three, actually.

MEGAN

Okay. I got you. You're one of those.

ARON

Yes, Ma'am. One of those.

They walk on, pleased to be together.

KRISTI

Spend a lot of time out here?

ARON

My second home.

38

EXT. CANYON. DAY.

38

They stop at a junction.

ARON

It's this fork here.

KRISTI

Oh. Okay. Totally missed that. Glad we bumped into you.

MEGAN

Yeah. What are the chances of that? I mean, out here?

ARON

You go to the one place in America you can guarantee you won't run into some weirdo and.... whaddya know!

They all laugh and head up the narrow canyon.

39

EXT. CANYON. DAY.

39

Aron stops.

ARON

The guidebook route's that way. But there's a better way in. The cool way.

MEGAN

(gently teasing)

Oh, the *cool* way, huh?

ARON

No kidding, it's like the most fun you can have with your clothes on- though, honestly, it's best *without* your clothes on.

MEGAN  
Aron Ralston...

ARON  
Seriously, you'll never forget it.

The girls look at each other.

ARON (CONT'D)  
It's a bit of a climb...

KRISTI AND MEGAN  
We climb!

ARON  
And a squeeze.

KRISTI AND MEGAN  
We squeeze!

They all laugh.

40

EXT. NORTH WASH SLOT. DAY.

40

Kristi, Megan and Aron are suspended fifty feet up a thin slot between two sheer walls of rock. Only the friction from their bodies keeps them in place. Flat to the rock, they nudge their way sideways like something out of an Egyptian painting. Aron is in the lead, chatting away, oblivious to the giggling nervousness of the two girls behind him.

MEGAN  
- wait, you get us in here and now you tell us you're *not* a guide? You said...

Aron plays up to her panic.

ARON  
No, I'm an engineer. But this is what I really want to do.

MEGAN  
And I *really* want to be a super model. Jesus, I mean, what if these two slabs move?

KRISTI  
They've been here for millions of years. They're not gonna move.

ARON  
Sure they are.

MEGAN

*What?*

ARON

Everything is moving all the time. Let's hope it's not today.

MEGAN

Great.

ARON

Nearly there.

KRISTI

Where?

ARON

Here.

The girls look puzzled.

ARON (CONT'D)

You just got to remember that it's all gonna be okay. See you down there!

And he relaxes his arms, shoulders, feet- all the things that are wedging him tight into the crack. Instantly, he is falling vertically down into the unknown. Megan screams, a genuine shout of fear.

We see Aron drop through a large hole in the rock and launch out of sight, into midair with a holler of joy.

41 INT. DOME POOL. DAY.

41

He drops 60 feet through the hole in the roof of the rock dome into the most exquisite emerald blue pool.

KRISTI O/S

Oh my God!

42 EXT. NORTH WASH SLOT. DAY.

42

They can't see him, only hear the explosive crack of man on water. He could be dead.

MEGAN

Jesus Christ! Aron! Are you okay? Aron?

Aron fills the cathedral dome with his version of a Phish song at the top of his voice.

KRISTI

Listen to the guy. He's okay.

MEGAN

He's bat shit!

ARON O/S

C'mon! Fly! You can do it!

The two girls look at each other, petrified.

43

INT. DOME POOL. DAY.

43

We are in the pool with Aron. Slick wet hair, buzzing with adrenaline. He is looking up through the hole at Kristi and Megan who are sitting above him at the beginning of the slide, looking absolutely terrified.

ARON

Just let go! It'll all be fine. Trust me.

KRISTI

Trust you? I'll *kill* you, Aron Ralston!

MEGAN

You love this really...

44

EXT. NORTH WASH SLOT. DAY.

44

Kristi looks at Megan. Nods at the squeeze.

KRISTI

Well, I'm not going back, that's for sure. Shit.

Takes two deep breaths.

KRISTI (CONT'D)

Been nice knowing you, Megs.

And with a scream, she lets go. Crashes into the pool. A pause and then a whoop of sheer joy.

KRISTI O/S

Go for it, Megan, it's fine!

MEGAN

Oh, fuckfuckfuckfuckfuck....

And she lets go, too, and shoots into the abyss.



45 INT. DOME POOL. DAY.

45

Megan tumbles out of the sky towards them. Crashes into the blue water. Comes up screaming. They bob together in the centre, their breath coming in short excited bursts. The light seemingly coming from beneath them and rippling over the cavernous ceiling. They are laughing- at their own daring, at the craziness of where they are, at being alive.

MEGAN

Oh my God, oh my God...

KRISTI

Again. We've got to go again.

They all look at each other, and simultaneously say...

ARON, KRISTI AND MEGAN

Camera!

46 EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAVE. LATER.

46

Lying on a slab of rock, they are drying off in the sun. The remains of lunch surround them. Kristi is stretched out near Aron, taking in the sun on her near naked body. Megan has taken off most of her clothes to dry too.

Camera stills.

Aron at the top of various snowy Colorado peaks. Some have far-reaching views, others are beset with snow flurries, Aron only just visible underneath hood, helmet and balaclava.

ARON V/O

That's Longs Peak, Holy Cross,  
Capitol... the Maroon Bells.

But always, it's just Aron, centre of frame, taking a photo of himself.

KRISTI V/O

Could be anywhere.

ARON V/O

Big storm on Mt Princeton... I'm on  
course to be the first person to solo  
all the Fourteeners in winter.

MEGAN V/O

Always on your own?

ARON V/O

Umm, that's the point of soloing. You're  
on your own.

Then we see Aron and Kristi who is holding the camera.

KRISTI

Why?

ARON

Nobody likes me.

MEGAN

Or that awful band you're always singing. Phish. Ugh.

ARON

Exactly. Nobody likes me or my music. Gotta go solo.

But Kristi really wants to know.

KRISTI

Seriously. Nobody to share the view with - though if you're doing it in winter, hello, what view? The experience. Nobody to share *that* with. Seems kinda lonely.

ARON

(shrugs)

It's the way I like it.

Still a little mystified, Kristi gives the camera back to Aron. Lies back on the slab to take in the sun. Catches Aron checking his watch.

KRISTI

(wryly)

Behind schedule?

He looks at her. Without turning her closed eyes from the sun, she smiles.

ARON

Actually, I stopped the clock.

This gets a response. She turns.

KRISTI

You "stopped the clock"?

ARON

I'm timing myself. Seeing if I can beat the guide book time. When you guys are gone... click. Clock's running again.

KRISTI

Huh.

She turns back to the sun.

MEGAN  
No girlfriend, then, Aron?

ARON  
Nobody special.

KRISTI  
There's always somebody special. There's always the "one".

ARON  
Not for me.

KRISTI  
They all say that.

MEGAN  
Sounds real certain about it.

ARON  
Yes, Ma'am.

47 EXT. TRAIL. DAY.

47

The three are walking down the dry water-course, tiny chatting figures at the bottom of gigantic vertical walls.

ARON  
...Blue John was Butch Cassidy's cook.  
Hid out in the canyon when he was on the run.

MEGAN  
Cool.

ARON  
Come with me. Might see his ghost.

KRISTI  
We gotta get back.

MEGAN  
I guess.

ARON  
Okay.

They reach a cross-roads.

ARON (CONT'D)  
One last photo?

They pose with raven feathers in their hair as Aron turns the camera round.

*VIDEO STILL POV of all three, their heads tight together.*

MEGAN

Listen, some friends of ours are having a party tomorrow night if you want to swing by.

ARON

Yeah? Where?

But he is already delving in his back-pack, getting out his CD player and putting on his headphones.

MEGAN

Twenty miles North, on the road to Green River, behind the old motel. We're putting up this massive inflatable Scooby Doo. Can't miss it.

ARON

Cool.

Re-shouldering the pack, adjusting the head-phones.

MEGAN

Turn down that track and it's about two miles further on. Starts late, goes all night. We'll have some beers chilling for you.

ARON

Sounds great.

He checks his watch. Puts his hand to it. Click.

ARON (CONT'D)

Well, so long!

Turns. A finger hits the button on the CD player.

We see the CD begin to spin. The LED display tells us there's 38:47 to play before 0:01 appears.

The noise of ten thousand people cheering blasts his- and our- ears.

CD RECORDING

Good evening, Las Vegas...! Are you having a good time? Are you ready? Are you....readdddyyyy?

The music crashes over us. Aron's running feet negotiate the rough ground.

Close up of Aron's face, eyes already focussed on placing his feet. The measured breathing of an athlete pacing himself. Megan shouts after him.

MEGAN  
Scooby Doo, yeah?

But he is in a different world.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
Do you think he'll come? You liked him,  
right?

She looks at Kristi looking at Aron. Nudges her knowingly.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
Yeah, you liked him.

Kristi continues to stare at his disappearing figure.

KRISTI  
Know what? I don't think we figured in  
his day at all.

48 EXT. BLUE JOHN CANYON. ENTRY SLOT. DAY.

48

Aron's eyes. We see what really figures in his day. His hands grip small holds. His feet smear on smooth rock. He is moving down steep rock, hands and feet moving carefully but confidently. Without warning his feet suddenly slide forward from under him and he skates/snap-kicks trying to keep his balance on a floor of scattering pebbles left there by a flood. There's a flash of the sky and dazzling sunlight.

Only his arms and the proximity now of the walls prevent him landing hard on his ass.

A small snake slithers away from his giant feet.

49 INT. CANYON. DAY.

49

We are below him, watching from underneath a water-worn, S-shaped log trapped across a narrow fissure. Aron's mouth sings along to the music as he reaches the S-shaped log, crouches down, gives it two firm hits with his palm. Solid.

ARON  
Good enough.

He drops all the weight onto his arms, allows his body to dead-hang from the log for a couple of beats:

ARON (CONT'D)  
Three, two, one...go.

And he drops the six feet to the sandy ground below. His feet neatly hit the sand with a puff of dust. Nothing to it.

50 EXT. S-SHAPED LOG. DAY.

50

He takes a photo of the S-shaped log above him. Right into the blinding sun.

**Title: 2:41 PM. Saturday, April 26th. 2003.**

ARON  
Won't be coming back this way.

51 INT. SLOT CANYON. DAY. (FROM HERE ON, CANYON SHOTS **INT.**) 51

He spins and continues along the narrow alley of the slot canyon, seeing the first huge chockstones, half-buried in the sand, big as trucks. He easily scrambles over one and around another.

Thump, thump. He gives it two firm hits with his palm again, an automatic instinct that accompanies every new boulder. The boulder doesn't move.

It's a tight fit, but he's like a contortionist and just squeezes through.

52 INT. DEEPER INTO THE CANYON. DAY.

52

The slot is now just 4 ft wide and as he stops to look at massive logs jammed way above his head, silhouetted against the cloudless blue, he drinks deeply from his water bottle.

53 INT. CANYON RIM. LOOKING DOWN. DAY.

53

On we go and so does the concert in Aron's head. He pumps the air to the music. One set of chockstones leads to another. He rapidly negotiates them like an obstacle race, giving each one the requisite test with his palm to check for movement. Then, he is stopped by one the size of a big refrigerator, jammed between the walls of the canyon, eighteen inches above the floor.

54 INT. CANYON. CHOCKSTONES. DAY.

54

Over or under? He drops to his belly and squeezes underneath, rucking the sandy floor in front of him. He's halfway, his chest rising out the far side when suddenly, he jams. The music locks up too, looping continuously on two notes like bad techno. He pushes but nothing.

Utter stillness. Only a flicker of panic in Aron's blinking eyes reassures us that the world has not frozen.

We see from his point of view. There's a hell of a lot of stone above him.

Then Aron slowly reaches back with his hand. With the careful precision of a lock-picker, he releases a part of his back-pack strap that has snagged. The music unjams too. He jumps up, brushes off the sand.

55 INT. SLOT CANYON. DAY.

55

Tight on Aron's throat as he swallows water down from his Camelbak. Big gulps.

We follow his gaze down the slot. It's steeper, now. We're already 60 feet below ground level it's falling further in front of us. This is more like caving. He gets the map out.

56 INT/EXT. SILHOUETTE PROFILE. CROSS SECTION OF THE CANYON. ~~DAY~~.

We see a section of the canyon and the tiny figure of Aron moving within it. We track in and elide into a graphic view of him chimneying his way along the canyon- now only three feet wide at most. We see his skill, using his legs, back friction to body-walk along the smooth, sheer walls. He's going deep.

57 INT. SLOT CANYON. DAY.

57

He moves towards another chockstone below him. You can see his thinking: this one's about the size of a bus wheel. He can crouch on top, dead-hang from it and reduce the drop to the canyon floor.

58 INT. SLOT CANYON. DAY.

58

He reaches it at the same time we do, jumping down on top of it. Crouches. Gives it the two thumps with his palm. Solid. Reaches his hand around the back of the boulder for a hold. Dangles.

C/U tight on Aron.

Just as he dangles, there's a scraping sound. Small, but close. The stone judders towards him, pulled by the torque of his hand, weighting it from the back. It rotates.

ARON

Shit.

Instantly and instinctively, he lets go and drops - as if he's trying to detach a mine dragging him to the sea floor.

59 INT. CANYON. ON CHOCKSTONE. DAY. 59

But it's following him down.

60 INT. CANYON. ARON'S POV. DAY. 60

The backlit chockstone falls towards him. A ton of boulder, consuming the sky.

61 INT. SLOT CANYON. DAY. 61

He lifts his arms to protect his head, but his eyes remain open. Through his fingers, we see the next three seconds.

The rock grabs his left hand and flings it against the left wall. He pulls it away as the rock ricochets against the canyon wall and careers towards his right arm which he instinctively raises to protect his head.

The rock smashes his right wrist and hand against the wall and drags it down, tearing the skin from him like a cheese-grater.

Aron is utterly powerless to stop its force, able only to land on his feet as the rock crunches to a halt, trapped in the slot. With his hand. Everything stops.

Title: 127 HOURS.

The word HOURS fades to be replaced by numbers 00.00. The zeros turn into minutes and hours. 126.59.59. They start counting down. The clock is running.

62 INT. CANYON FLOOR. DAY. 62

No movement. Aron's standing behind the rock. As if he's in a line for a bus, as if he's shaking someone's hand. A handshake with a canyon.

Silence, except for waves of applause and cheering coming from the head-phones that have been ripped off Aron's head. The cheering and clapping comes to a painfully slow end. Now, shocked, utter silence.



63

INT. CANYON FLOOR. DAY.

63

Adrenaline, searing roaring pain and panic.

ARON

Get your hand *outta there!*

Pulls and pulls. Yanks, twists, screws until his shoulder is almost dislocated. But nothing moves.

Sweat on his face.

ARON (CONT'D)

Shit, shit, shit!

He pushes the boulder with his left hand to reverse the movement. Heaves at it with every sinew in his body. Nothing. Heaves again. And again and again, thrusting with his knees, thighs, shoulder, everything. Nothing. He rests for a while, taking huge breaths.

ARON (CONT'D)

This is - this is... *insane.*

Even gives a brief puff of laughter. Gathers himself. Slams upwards with his entire body, a man running full pelt into a door.

ARON (CONT'D)

Unnn...agh!

Air explodes out of his lungs. A howl of phenomenal pain. Not a millimeter of movement.

ARON (CONT'D)

No, no, no no no no. Fuck!

He goes limp, whimpering in sweat. His knees are bleeding from smashing them into the rock. He looks at his good fingers, now lacerated. He would collapse to the floor. But he can't. He's stuck.

He grabs a bit of shirt, wipes the sweat away from his eyes. Loosens the strap on his back-pack, pulls it over his head and hula-hoops it around his body until it falls at his feet. With his free hand, he gets out the water bottle. Drinks deep. One gulp, two gulps, three - stops, mid fourth and backwashes it into the bottle.

ARON (CONT'D)

No. No more water.

One-handed, he rescrews the lid with difficulty. Drops it back in his pack.

ARON (CONT'D)

Stop. Relax. Come on, think.

He breathes and breathes, taking stock for the first time.

64 INT. CANYON FLOOR. DAY.

64

Aron examines the boulder at each point he can reach - stretching and contorting his body to see in to his crushed hand, to where his thumb is visible above and his little finger below. Compares left hand with right. The right wrist is now squeezed to the size of the width of his little finger. We know because he can barely get the little finger of his left hand in the gap. He's still processing this whole event; how unlikely, how bizarre.

ARON

Jesus. Jesus. How? How did you do *this*?  
You idiot, you total idiot! It's  
crushed, man. It's fucking dying.

He reaches up and touches the trail of blood, hair and skin on the canyon wall. Looks at it on his fingertips. Silence. Except for the tick, tick, of his watch.

With his teeth, he undoes his watch.

We see the time in big close-up.

C/U. WATCH

3.14. Click. The second hand of the stop-watch comes to a halt.

65 INT. CANYON. DAY.

65

Aron looks up at the slit of sky. Shouts.

ARON

Hello?

Tries again.

ARON (CONT'D)

Kristi! Megan! Anyone there? Hello?

66 INT/EXT. PULL OUT OF THE CANYON. DAY.

66

From the slot canyon, back, back, back, higher and higher until it nothing more than a hair-line crack in the millions of filaments that make up this endless desert.

67 INT. CANYON FLOOR. DAY.

67

Aron unpacks everything with great energy. Lays it all out at his feet. A man taking stock.

BIG C/U: various. Day.

Aron examines each item in turn, looking for its potential. These are his only companions.

Chocolate bar wrappers, a bakery bag with crumbs of muffin. Two small bean burritos. A CD player, CDs, LED head-lamp with spare AA batteries, mini cam-corder, stills camera, bike-lock key, climbing harness, rehydration pack (he checks for water - empty) money, credit cards, map, climbing rope in rope bag, a stick, and a small multi-tool.

He stares at it all, neatly laid out around his feet. It all stares back.

He picks up the multi-tool. Opens all the blades. Thinks.

C/U: DIGITAL NUMERALS.

3.28 changes to 3.29.

68 INT. CANYON FLOOR. DAY.

68

Inside the tiny gap we see Aron's head-lamp flick on. We see the rock, the wall and his hand, trapped between the two. He picks a point and begins to chip away with the multi-tool. He's back. Energy, purpose, action.

He stops to assess his hand. Flexes it. It's swollen and puffy. He doesn't dwell on it. Gets back to chipping.

A rhythm develops. Chip, chip, chip. Flex, flex, flex of the hand. And back to the chipping.

C/U: DIGITAL NUMERALS.

4.19 changes to 4.20.

69 INT. CANYON FLOOR. DAY.

69

Huge close up of Aron's eye. In the foreground there is a pile of steel filings mixed with the small pile of sand-dust.

ARON

That's not rock. It's metal. Wearing  
down the knife.

He blows the whole pile of steel filings into our face.

70 INT. CANYON FLOOR. DAY.

70

The dust clears from our eyes. Aron chips away at the boulder again. Stops. Changes tack and starts chipping away at the wall. Stops. Considers.

71 INT. CANYON FLOOR. DAY.

71

ARON

And....

Aron is bent forward, his face almost on his trapped arm. In his teeth is the knife, balanced upright with his lips, the tip of the blade on the rock. His good hand brings a flat rock smashing down on the top of the knife.

Instead of making any inroads into chipping the boulder, the rock explodes in his hand, showering Aron - and us - with fragments.

The knife bounces off the rock, hits his shorts. As he moves to grab it, he misses it and knocks it further round the back of his leg.

He pivots to try to catch it again, but gravity is quicker and the tool falls into a hole between the rounded rocks near his left foot.

ARON (CONT'D)

No, no, no.....!

72 INT. CANYON FLOOR. DAY.

72

The knife is visible in the crack below and behind his right leg. Because he can't twist, he can't get anywhere near it. Heaves against the canyon wall to get there. Pointless. Aron is furious with himself.

ARON

Shit!

He pulls off his right shoe and tries to squeeze his foot into the hole. Too big. He looks upward. Can't believe it.

ARON (CONT'D)

Shit, shit, shit!

73 INT. BENEATH CANYON FLOOR. DAY.

73

We're on a level with the knife in the hole beneath Aron's feet. An enormous light blasts on overhead. Aron's head-lamp. The stick enters from top of screen and nudges the knife in a semi-circle. It's all a bit arcade game if it wasn't so fucking serious. No success. The stick is withdrawn. The knife remains.

Pause. An ant runs over the knife.

The stick returns. This time, its top is almost broken off to form a natural hook. We push in on the knife as the stick hooks through the little ring on the end of the knife. Slowly, slowly, it lifts.

74 INT. ARON IN CANYON. DAY.

74

Looking down onto the ground, around his leg, his toes holding the stick like a chopstick. Tremulously, his leg lifts the knife out and up towards his good arm. Slowly, breathlessly, he picks it off the end of the stick. For the first time in a long time, a smile.

ARON

Sweet.

75 INT. WIDE INT. CANYON. NIGHT.

75

We're with the wind blowing dust through the canyon slot. As we weave through the narrow canyon, we come across a miner in the distance, digging at the rock.

76 INT. CANYON. NIGHT.

76

Aron is using the shorter file from the multi-tool now and has tied a shoe-lace to his wrist through the ring of the tool.

He pulls his cap down to keep most of the dust from blowing in his eyes. His lips are caked in sand, but he keeps blowing on his arm to keep it clear.

C/U: DIGITAL NUMERALS.

The luminous watch changes to 00.00.

Title: **Sunday.**

77 INT. ARON IN THE CANYON. NIGHT.

77

Aron celebrates midnight with a tiny, careful sip of water. He holds it in his mouth, puffing his cheeks, circulating the precious fluid.

He leans his head against the canyon wall. Closes his eyes.

78 EXT. EXTRAORDINARY LANDSCAPE. DAZZLING DAYLIGHT. DAY.

78

Daylight, a lunar landscape almost, though with patches of green and giant boulders, Aron whom we sense only by being around his shoulder is out walking with his friend. They wander through this field of boulders. It's as if we're on the moon

looking over Buzz Aldrin's shoulder at Neil Armstrong; it certainly sounds like that...

They come upon one the size of a house buried nose deep in the field.

ARON'S FRIEND

Wow, look at the size of this one.

There's no cliffs or mountains anywhere near.

ARON'S FRIEND (CONT'D)

How the fuck did this get here?

Aron's friend looks around, then right up at the sky, then at him. Shrugs. Laughs.

79 INT. CANYON. NIGHT.

79

Chip, chip, chip. He stretches his left arm, flexes his legs. Changes blade. Prises at a section of rock with the file. Without warning a dime-sized shred of boulder arcs through the night. He catches it perfectly on his right elbow.

ARON

Cool.

Picks it off his arm and places it on top of the rock. A grain of sand on a sea-shore. But something. He stands up from his crouch. Flexes. Man, his legs are aching.

80 INT. ABOVE ARON, LOOKING INTO CANYON. NIGHT.

80

Aron is in his harness. He is throwing 30 feet of rope up towards us. A tangle of knots and carabiners at the end of it looking for purchase close to camera. Each time, it falls back. He persists. Dozens of jump cuts, dozens of attempts.

Finally it catches.

He pulls on the rope, gently at first, then fiercely. It's caught. He clips the rope into his harness and sinks gently down, allowing the weight off his feet.

ARON

Ahhhhhhh.

He dangles, luxuriating in the sudden weightlessness. Examines the knuckles of his left hand, skinned by the digging.

He switches off his head-lamp. Eyes close. Black....

81 INT/EXT. VARIOUS. DAY.

81

A re-run of the accident. He can now witness it in detail, from all angles - almost as if his role is to point out the salient details of the accident. 3 seconds becomes 30.... We fall with his face in high-definition slow motion, watching his future.

We fall with the rock chasing him pitilessly to the bottom of the canyon.

82 INT. CANYON. PRE-DAWN.

82

Aron's eyes snap open and he stands unsteadily. Rubs at his legs and arms. Starts chipping at the boulder again.

83 INT. CANYON. TIME-LAPSE. PRE-DAWN.

83

Lit only by the head-lamp, the black shifts to grey and then finally, light. He watches it arrive. A rush of wind. A noise.

He whips his head to look up. A raven flaps overhead.

RAVEN

Caw-caw.

84 EXT. SKY. DAWN.

84

The raven flies the length of the canyon slit above him. Blue, blue sky.

85 INT. CANYON. DAWN.

85

He stretches his neck, desperate to follow the only other living thing in this universe. But it's gone. He stares at its absence for a long time.

ARON

Caw-caw.

86 INT. CANYON. DAWN.

86

Aron is very still, staring at the rock and the open blade lying on top of it. Steeling himself to start work.

Suddenly, he looks over his shoulder and sees a dagger of sunlight cutting across the top of the slot. Sunrise.

87 EXT. ARON'S TRUCK. PRE-DAWN

87

We are behind Aron as he hurtles up Aspen Main Street and screeches to a halt outside a house. Still behind Aron we leave the truck. The silhouettes of people on one rooftop.

Fairy lights. An all-night party. As we look up from behind him a girl, mid-20s, red hair, beautiful, turns and leans over towards him, calling down. She speaks with a slight French accent.

RANA

Ralston - there you are! Get up here!

88 EXT. FIRE-ESCAPE. PRE-DAWN.

88

We're rushing up the steps, two, maybe three at a time, behind Aron. He bursts onto the roof and into the party. Much jeering and cheering but just in time to see the sunrise blaze over the far snow-capped mountains and flood over the rooftop. Amongst the party carnage his friends are sitting on sofas and deck-chairs. Rana, lit by God, brings him a Margarita and a dazzling smile.

RANA

Glad you made it Aron.

The sun ascends and the party, drunk as skunks, greet the day.

C.U: DIGITAL NUMERALS.

9.30 AM

89 INT. CANYON. DAWN.

89

He watches the sunbeam as if it's a living thing. It moves towards him. He stretches his hand towards it. Can't get to it. It's going to miss him. He whips off his left shoe and sock and pushes his leg towards the beam of light. Slowly, it climbs, caressing his ankle and calf. He pulls the other sock off and bathes this one now.



The sunlight hits the canyon beyond the boulder. Suddenly, the entire slot bursts with pink and gold light. Aron stares.

90 INT. CANYON. DAY. VIDEO MESSAGE ONE.

90

*Electronic static and then Aron's image.*

ARON

*It's three oh five on Sunday, April 27th, two thousand and three. This marks twenty-four hours of being stuck in Blue John Canyon just where it slots up above the Big Drop. My name is Aron Ralston. My parents are Donna and Larry Ralston of Englewood, Colorado.*

*A long pause.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*Whoever finds this, you can keep the camcorder. But please make an attempt to find my parents. Give them the tape. Be sure of it. I would appreciate it.*

*He takes long blinks, seems to avoid looking at himself though the screen is facing him. He looks alarmed and wide-eyed, though his speech is oddly slow and slurry.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*So.... I was descending Blue John yesterday, when this happened.*

*The camera swings rounds to show where his forearm and wrist disappear into the horrifyingly skinny gap between the chockstone and the wall.*

91 INT/EXT. VARIOUS. CANYON. DAY.

91

*Flashes of the accident, almost in silhouette, as if an animation side-view. It freezes just before the moment of entombment.*

92 INT. CANYON. DAY. VIDEO MESSAGE ONE.

92

ARON

*What you're looking at there is my arm going into the rock... this chockstone was loose. Rolled onto my arm and it's - stuck. It's been without circulation for twenty-four hours now. It's a kind of grey, blue color. No circulation.*

*He pulls the camera back round to his face.*

ARON (CONT'D)  
*It's pretty well gone. I'm low on food  
 and -*

*He leans, picks up the water bottle and shakes it for the benefit  
 of whoever might ever watch this.*

ARON (CONT'D)  
*Yeah. That's about three hundred, four  
 hundred mill in there. That's it for  
 water.*

*Another long pause. Forced smile.*

ARON (CONT'D)  
*I'm in pretty deep doo-doo here.*

*The smile is replaced by something nearer sudden terror. Suddenly  
 the screen turns to static.*

93

INT. CANYON. DAY.

93

*Aron gathers himself. Clears his throat. Switches back on.*

VIDEO MESSAGE ONE.

ARON  
*I've had a lot of time to think about  
 this... and the way I see it is there  
 are four options. One: try to move the  
 boulder. I managed to get a rope around  
 that other chockstone up there -*

*The camera swings up to the sky, focusses on another boulder.*

ARON (CONT'D)  
*- but I've only got the gear to rig a  
 three, four-to-one ratio. And this  
 boulder must be a ton. Do the Math.  
 Option two, chip away at the rock. Been  
 doing that. A lot. But I'm beginning to  
 think that my hand is actually  
 supporting it. So every time I chip it a  
 bit, the rock just settles further.*

94 INT. WIDE. MOVING THROUGH THE CANYON. REAL TIME. 94

A breeze slides through the canyon. Five seconds of involuntary shuddering from Aron that shakes his whole body.

95 INT. CANYON. DAY. VIDEO MESSAGE ONE. 95

ARON

*Christ.*

*He pulls himself together.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*So option three: cut my arm off.*

*He shrugs. As best he can in the circumstances.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*Which is pretty much suicide. It's 4 hours to my vehicle down canyon and 4 hours back to my bike but the climbing... I think it will be impossible with one hand. Between the blood loss and the dehydration I think I would die if I cut my arm.*

*Pause.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*Animals do it. In a trap. Bite off their own leg.*

*Another long pause.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*They die anyway. Option four is to survive. Hunker down. Wait for rescue.*

*He turns away from camera. Suddenly a guilty man. Looks back. How to say this?*

ARON (CONT'D)

*Didn't tell anyone where I was I was going, did I? No note on the truck.*

*Another strange smile.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*Rule number one, First Grade, just before 'don't talk to strangers'. Dumb. Dumb. Dumb.*

*Nothing left to say. The video whirrs on until his eyes snap into focus.*

96 INT. CANYON. DAY. REAL TIME. 96

Aron suddenly alert. Footsteps. Something. He can hear something. Electrified, his head snaps around trying to locate the direction.

97 INT. CANYON. DAY. VIDEO MESSAGE ONE/ CANYON REAL TIME. 97

We see variously on tape and in real time reacting. He's forgotten the camera in his hand- the angles are crazy and oblique, but shocking nonetheless. He is screaming, screaming. We can see the unleashed panic, the fear, the desperation.

ARON  
Help! Help! Hello? Please!

Stops, wide-eyed to listen. Definitely noise.

ARON (CONT'D)  
Help me! Help me! Helllllp!

98 INT. CANYON. DAY. 98

He stops, heart racing, breathing hard. Still, the noise. Looks above and behind him. A kangaroo rat scuffling behind another chock-stone. The rat scuttles off.

ARON  
You little.... fucker.

Aron's entire frozen body goes limp.

99 INT. CANYON. DAY. 99

He stares at the camera in his hand. Sees it is still recording. Stops it. Rewinds. Re-runs the footage of the tinny screams for help coming from the speaker.

ARON V/O  
Help! Help! Hello? Please! Help me! Help me...!

Aron stops the tape and rewinds.

ARON  
No. You. Do. Not.

Takes a deep breath.

ARON (CONT'D)  
(almost to himself)  
Hold it together.

- 100 EXT. GOOGLE-EARTH SATELLITE SHOT OF WILDERNESS. DUSK. 100  
We're high above the desert. In time-lapse, we see nightfall: a soft, grey, endless line of darkness cross the earth.
- 101 C/U: DIGITAL THERMOMETER. 101  
The temperature gauge on his watch falls ridiculously fast from 70 degrees down to 48.
- 102 INT. CANYON. NIGHT. 102  
Jump-cut, strobe-lit as if stop-frame animation: Aron madly gets dressed for the night.  
He cannibalizes everything he can get his hands on, using his knife, his teeth, his free hand.  
He tears holes in a cloth camera bag. Thrusts his good arm into the newly fashioned sleeve. Pulls it around him with his teeth.  
Wraps purple webbing around his right arm.  
Shoves the empty Camelbak water bladder between the wall and his right arm to insulate it.  
Wraps a grocery bag around his upper right bicep.  
Curls the dirty green-and-yellow ropes around his legs. Like he's being squeezed by a python.  
All done at massive speed. To generate warmth, stop him from thinking.  
Finally, he sticks his head inside the rope bag.
- 103 INT. ROPE BAG. NIGHT. 103  
It's lined with plastic. Shiny. By the light of the head-lamp, he's suddenly alarmingly illuminated.
- 104 EXT. ROPE BAG. NIGHT. 104  
From the outside, he looks a cross between an alien and a tramp.
- 105 INT. ROPE BAG. NIGHT. 105  
Bizarrely, Aron laughs, aware of how ridiculous he looks.

ARON  
The Michelin Man! Bit thinner. Lot  
thinner.

Stops laughing. He roots in his pocket, pulls out the remains of a bean burrito. Takes a bite. Chews slow, heavy, masticating on a dry mouth.

106 INT. ARON'S TRUCK. DUSK. 106

We're in his truck again but this time over his shoulder and we can see the Scooby Doo Figure dancing in the distance. It's now lit up too, as night is falling, and we're coming at it from the other direction. As he gets to it he swerves and follows its guide to the party.

107 EXT. DRIVEWAY. NIGHT 107

Pulling up at the party.

108 INT. PARTY. NIGHT. 108

Inside it's nice, full of ordinary decent people, though no one acknowledges Aron as we stay attached to his shoulder.

There's a mini-Scooby Doo dancing in the main room and there's a light, early party atmosphere. Aron searches for the girls, approaching any cluster to see which girls they contain. The clusters part slightly as he approaches, give the camera polite smiles and then ignore us. The camera moves onto the next group, searching.

109 INT. ROPE BAG. NIGHT. 109

Black. We can hear breathing in an enclosed space.

ARON  
I've not paid a lot of attention over  
the years. Said a few bad things about  
you, admit it. But I guess you know  
that. God.

A long silence. Then a rustle and a sudden blast of light illuminates Aron. Ghostly green. The head-lamp bouncing off the shiny interior of the rope bag.

ARON (CONT'D)

Look, God, I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do. I've tried everything I can think of. I. Don't. Know. What. To do. You want me to go to church every Sunday, never climb again, never curse, whatever. It's done. I'll sign right on the line. Though I might have to write left-handed because- well, because, y'know, under the circumstances

-

A burst of hysterical laughter which frightens him. He wrestles himself back into control.

ARON (CONT'D)

Seriously. I will. Just get me out of here. Please. Out of here.

Pause. And then his entire body spasms with cold.

ARON (CONT'D)

Ungg-ggg-ggg....!

Five seconds of demonic shaking from the multi-coloured headless man. This too is scary for Aron.

ARON (CONT'D)

Yeah. Funny.

He lays his hooded face against the rock. Shuts his eyes.

Black.

ARON (CONT'D)

Oh, Jesus.

110 INT. ASPEN STORE. DAY.

110

Aron is standing at one end of the store counter: at no point do we see Aron but we sense him in reflective surfaces, his arms, particularly his right one and his feet occasionally come into shot. As does a guide-book that Aron is flicking through. Brion glances up.

BRION

Where you goin'?

ARON

Dunno yet.

He shuts the book, turns to go.

ARON (CONT'D)

See you Tuesday.

BRION  
Have a good one.

ARON  
Always do.

111 C/U: DIGITAL NUMERALS. 111  
11.59 Changes to 00.00.

112 INT. CANYON. NIGHT. 112  
He pulls his bag off and pulls his water bottle out of the ground where he has half-buried it. It won't open. He can't unscrew it. He mutters, cursing himself for tightening the lid too much. He puts it between his teeth and levers with his head, but nothing. Is his strength vanishing so quickly?  
He looks at his puffy left hand, there's a tremble in it. He shakes it to get rid of the tremble and jams the bottle between his legs. He uses a bit of cloth to give his hand better purchase on the top. We're tight on the neck of the bottle as it releases, finally and he lifts it, slowly, almost ceremonially. Controlling the tilt, a half-mouthful of water slides onto his tongue. He tilts the bottle back towards upright but not the whole way. He waits. Circulating the splash of water around his mouth.

113 INT. CANYON. C/U: BOTTLE NECK 113  
The bottle neck stares at Aron.

114 INT. CANYON. C/U: ARON 114  
... his eyes staring at the bottle neck.

115 INT. CANYON. NIGHT. 115  
He still holds the water in his mouth as he rewinds the top onto the bottle and reburies it in the sand to stop any evaporation. He moves to pop his contact lenses into his mouth and wash them in the moisture. First one then the other as we...



116 INT. ARON'S APARTMENT. DAY. 116

The images shift with the lens change back to his apartment, daylight. The the phone rings once, twice... 3, 4, 5 times. The answer-phone clicks on.

Aron's cheery voice from another life.

ARON (ANSWER-PHONE)  
Hi Aron here! Leave a message.

117 INT. ARON'S APARTMENT. DAY. 117

In front of his bathroom mirror he's slipping his lenses in for the day. It looks like The Man Who Fell To Earth.

ANSWER-PHONE (MOM)  
Aron, it's Mom. Hoping to catch you.  
Nothing urgent. Dad's in New York so  
it'll be a quiet weekend.

Aron is clearly there but can't answer.

118 INT. C/U: VARIOUS. ARON & MIRROR. DAY. 118

Huge close-ups that freak people out who've never worn lenses. Mirror shots and lots of short soft focus.

ANSWER-PHONE (MOM)  
Call me. Lots of love.

The long tone of the disconnected line.

119 INT. CANYON FLOOR. PRE DAWN. 119

He is absolutely still. Almost absent. Flies buzz around him. Indeterminate time passes.

120 INT. DESERT. PRE-DAWN. MASSIVE CLOSE UP. 120

Big as a JCB, an ant crawls across Aron's face. His muscles twitch in response.

121 INT. ROPE BAG. PRE-DAWN.

121

Aron's eyes, open a slit. That's as much rest as he gets. Targets some puffs of breath at the ant. Doesn't work. Flicks the ant away with a finger. A couple of mosquitoes have appeared, hovering around.

Caption: **Monday**

122 INT. CANYON. PRE-DAWN.

122

Aron's busy. He is threading the end of rope under and around the boulder. Ties it into a circle of rope with one hand.

Next, he reaches as far up as he can- given the restrictions of his trapped arm- and ties overhand knots in the circle of rope already tied to the higher boulder. Each time, he falls back, breathing heavily before going up again. He is tireless.

Now, he reaches up and clips a carabiner to the circle. Then back up to clip his rope through it. Clips the rope through another carabiner clipped to the rope around the lower boulder. Goes up again to clip another carabiner and another rope. Now it is clear he is making a pulley.

Next, he takes a bight of rope and makes a hand loop.

With a huge tug, he pulls down on the hand loop. The ropes of the pulley tighten. Pulls with all his might. Nothing.

Undeterred, he ties a leg loop too. Puts one foot in and treads down hard as he is pulling. Nothing.

This time, both his feet are in leg loops. He is pushing down as hard as he can, almost a temper tantrum of heaving, tugging and stamping. Nothing.

He goes limp on the rope, open-mouthed with exhaustion and despair. Shuts his eyes. Tries to lick his parched lips.

123 INT/EXT. CANYON. VARIOUS. DAY.

123

Suddenly, we are crashing through the canyon, weaving this way and that, rollercoastering up and out onto flat desert. Past the chained-up bicycle and along the slick rock humps.

124 INT. ARON'S TRUCK. DAY.

124

We crash into the back of the truck and there, lying on its side is an almost-full bottle of Gatorade. And a grapefruit! They've got sparkly condensation on them- like advertising spritzer mist - all over them. And then there's another water bottle and an orange...

The Gatorade lies on its side and the liquid seems to be slapping slowly, backward and forward like a Lava lamp, bulging with wetness and moisture.

125 INT. CANYON. DAY. 125

Snap back to Aron's face. Aron tries to lick his lips. But it's a parody of lip licking. No saliva.

He reaches down to the water bottle. Wets his lips with the tiniest drop. A frown crosses his face.

126 INT. CANYON. DAY. 126

Aron is wrestling to unscrew the top of the Camelbak with his teeth. There's panic here. Puts the cap on the top of the rock-nearly drops it in his haste. What's the hurry. Unzips his flies in desperation, urinates into the Camelbak. Relief washes over his face.

When he's finished, he shakes the Camelbak, takes a tentative sniff which sends his head rearing back in disgust.

127 INT. CANYON. DAY. VIDEO MESSAGE TWO. 127

*Aron speaking to the video. He is beginning to fray at the edges a bit. Thinner, hollow-eyed. Still holding it together, but there are hints of darkness in his occasionally wayward delivery. Aron is trying not to look at himself.*

ARON

*It's freaking me out looking at myself  
so I hope you guys are OK with this.*

*Pause.*

128 INT. CANYON. DAY. REAL TIME 128

We can see two images of him when we go behind the camera balanced on the rock as he has deliberately turned the screen away from himself.

129 INT. CANYON. DAY. VIDEO MESSAGE TWO.

129

ARON

*It's Monday. All day. Bummer. I spent the morning trying to rig a pulley. Worth a try. But there's so much friction and it's climbing rope. Too much stretch. What I need is twenty metres of static rap rope.*

130 INT. ASPEN STORE. NIGHT.

130

Aron is there like a night-burglar with his headlamp. The camera is looking at neat coils of rope, hanging from hooks on the wall of the store. As Aron recites his shopping list, the camera moves along the wall, recording the items, fetishising the smooth metal and bright colours of climbing gear. Occasionally, a hand appears, slipping off the rack the things he needs for escape. Carabiners, the multi-coloured slings, the ascenders, the bolts....

ARON V/O

*Nine point eight mill. Three or four pulleys, a rack of carabiners, slings, a power drill and a bolt kit. Oh, and eight guys to haul.*

And yes, there are eight burly men standing in the doorway.

131 INT. CANYON. DAY. VIDEO MESSAGE TWO.

131

*A wry smile.*

ARON

*That would do it.*

132 INT. CANYON. DAY. REAL TIME.

132

We see him below us as the raven flies overhead. He flicks his head round to follow it as it goes.

133 INT. CANYON. DAY. VIDEO MESSAGE TWO.

133

ARON

*There's this raven. Flies overhead every morning. I clocked it at eight fifteen yesterday.*

*Looks at his watch.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*Right on time. I'll film it for you tomorrow. I have about one hundred and fifty millilitres of water left, which will keep me alive until tomorrow night. If I'm lucky. And I peed twice already. It's two days since I went last and then I nearly go wet myself. Bodily functions going weird on me. I saved the second lot in the Camelbak. Smells pretty rank, but it'll settle, I guess. Let it chill...Like Sauvignon Blanc... No number twos. Which will disappoint my insect friends. They're gonna have to wait. What else? I get fifteen minutes of sun at nine thirty.*

134 INT. CANYON. DAY. REAL TIME.

134

Aron is deathly still as we travel towards him with a dagger of light. His leg is stretched out and the only movement is the change of leg halfway through. He stays in shot throughout getting bigger and then smaller as the light approaches and recedes.

135 INT. BACK OF CAR. DAY.

135

Black. A car engine dies. A car door slams. Blurred vision. Aron's Dad leans in.

ARON'S DAD

We're here, kiddo.

We get out of the car, the camera our POV. Moves past the car. Stops to allow us to take in what we are seeing. We are standing on the lip of the Grand Canyon as the sun is coming up. Hundreds of miles of red desert stretch out in front of him.

YOUNG ARON V/O

Man.....!

We burst up and away, getting the briefest view of Young Aron and his Dad before they are dots in the maze of canyons.

136 INT. CANYON. DAY. VIDEO MESSAGE TWO.

136

ARON

*I keep chipping at the rock, but more to keep warm than anything else. I'm pretty sure it's actually making it worse. If that's possible.*

*Big pause.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*So.*

*Smiles in a slightly embarrassed way.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*I found this great tourniquet....*

137 INT. CANYON. DAY.

137

There is excitement on Aron's face. We see him pull the elastic neoprene tubing insulation from the Camelbak. Stretchy and strong, it emerges like a long snake. Perfect. He wraps the neoprene strip around his right forearm, below the elbow. Tightens it with his teeth. Knots it again. And again. Clips a carabiner into the end and twists and twists it tight. Bizarrely, this is great.

ARON

Owww. Oh, yeah. That hurts. That hurts.

Takes out the multi-tool and switches to the long blade. Then he presses the blade and draws it quickly across his forearm. Nothing. Repeats it harder. Then slashes hard, sawing viciously at the same point.

ARON (CONT'D)

Shit. Shit, shit.

Releases the tourniquet, allowing blood flow to return to his arm and a series of angry red slash marks to reveal themselves.

ARON (CONT'D)

That it?

He looks at the blade. Blows out a long, disgusted jet of air.

ARON (CONT'D)

Useless.

138 INT. CANYON. DAY. VIDEO MESSAGE TWO.

138

*Smiley again, in a slightly worrying way. The camera skims over the slash marks. Back onto Aron's face.*

ARON

*Lesson: don't buy the cheap, made-in-China multi-tool. Couldn't find my Swiss Army Knife. This one came free with a flashlight. And the flashlight was shit too....Kept it in the truck for-emergencies...*

Another wry smile.

ARON (CONT'D)

*Not blaming you, Mom. Really. As stocking-stuffers go, more than okay. How were you to know I'd get into this much trouble?*

*He looks directly into the lens for the first time.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*Hey, Sonja. I can hear you saying it.*

ARON (IN VISION) (CONT'D)

*Aron's really gone and done it this time.*

SONJA (OOV)

*Aron's really gone and done it this time.*

139 INT. ARON'S FAMILY HOME DAY. REAL TIME.

139

*We are looking through the window. There are his Mom and Dad, sitting on the sofa at home, his Dad with a glass of soda half-way to his lips. They are listening to his sister Sonja, aged 10 in this scene, who is sitting at the piano, playing Chopin's Nocturne number 2 in E Flat. Quiet and haunting. Across the room, Young Aron, aged 15, is filming the scene with a video camera.*

*We see the scene from the Young Aron's point of view- a stripy harsh-coloured video, moving in on Young Sonja until she turns and mouths silently- and very politely- the words "go away" to the camera before turning her attention back to the music.*

*We catch the Older Aron's ghostly reflection looking through the window, his hand touching the window pane.*

140 INT. CANYON. DAY.

140

Aron smiles.

ARON  
Way to go Sis.

141 INT. CANYON. DAY.

141

Aron shakes his water bottle to check the contents. He opens the top, tilts and then holds the water in his mouth as he ritualistically removes his contact lenses and washes them in his mouth.

Suddenly a shiver tears across him like an attack dog. He coughs a lens out. As he tries to catch it before it disappears in the sand, he tips the bottle in his lap.

The bottle falls horizontally on his shorts and a leak of sacred fluid darkens his tan shorts. He whips it upright.

ARON  
No.....! Useless fucking idiot! Jesus,  
pay attention.

He screws the lid carefully on. Shakes the bottle. Scarcely anything in there now. Can barely be bothered to lift the contact lens to his eye. But he does.

BIG C/U: EYE.

The contact lens slips onto Aron's open eye. He blinks and a shutter comes briefly down on the screen, raising again to reveal we are now in...

142 INT. UNKNOWN. NIGHT.

142

... the back of a vehicle crowded with people. Subjective camera means that we are Aron's POV. In front of him, at least half a dozen of his friends and Rana are excitedly chattering - though we can hear nothing.

Gradually, it becomes clear that it's night outside. They are undressing in their seats - not an easy thing to do - eliciting lots of laughter, more infantile than sexual.

There's a ferocious blizzard outside the vehicle. We're up a mountain, being buffeted by massive gusts of wind, hail and snow.

*They prepare themselves for a mutual signal.*

RANA  
Go!

And all the windows come down. The blizzard explodes inside the vehicle.



143 EXT. MOUNTAIN. NIGHT.

143

One shot outside. POVs of naked arms out the windows, shaking and saluting the storm. Their crazy, happy faces can be seen laughing through the windscreen as the snow invades the inside of the vehicle.

144 INT. VEHICLE. NIGHT.

144

Through the blizzard of snow inside the vehicle, the waving arms, the chaos, Rana's face turns from the front seat to face the camera.

RANA  
(her hand placed on her heart)  
I love you.

145 INT. CANYON. SUNSET.

145

Eyes, shut, Aron is dangling in his harness. He is so still, he might be dead.

An ant wanders across his free arm. The arm twitches. Twitches again, then shakes the ant off it. No more movement.

146 INT. BACK OF TRUCK. DAY.

146

The back of the truck is decked out with a mattress and sleeping bag. This is camping, Colorado style. Outside, lie trees and a lake.

We are looking down at Rana on Aron's chest. As ever with Aron's memories, the camera is our POV, Aron's eyes. We never see him, only her. There's clearly been sex and there's clearly going to be sex. The pheromones are coming off the screen. She puts a finger on his heart. Puts her head to it, listening.

RANA  
So how do I get in, huh? What is the-

Her English deserts her momentarily. She mimes turning a safe's combination lock on his chest.

ARON V/O  
Combination.

RANA  
Combination.

147 INT. CANYON. SUNSET. 147

The faintest of smiles from Aron. He mumbles the words.

ARON  
If I told you I'd have to kill you.

148 INT. BACK OF TRUCK. DAY. 148

RANA  
Already you kill me.

Her hand reaches down out of sight of the camera.

RANA (CONT'D)  
Ah. The combination. I have it.

She slides slowly down his chest.

149 INT. CANYON. SUNSET. 149

Suddenly, CRACK! A sound that makes Aron - and us - startle out of our seats.

He looks around, wide-eyed with fear.

Another crack. He looks down. Dark spots on his shorts.

150 EXT. SLOT CANYON. DAY. ARON'S POV. SUNSET 150

Looks up. There's an angry-looking, black motherfucker of a cloud above him.

151 INT. CANYON. SUNSET. 151

C./U on Aron's eyes. We look up at the sky. A blob of rain spatters the lens. And then another.

152 EXT. CANYON. SUNSET.

152

Suddenly, a crack of thunder like the earth has just split.

*A flash of Aron driving past the roadside sign that reads "DANGER FLASH FLOODS".*

Aron reacts as if it's come to get him. Panic.

ARON

No. No...

He wrenches at the boulder, pulls, pushes. Moans, heaves. Nothing, of course.

153 EXT. DESERT. SUNSET.

153

Massive, thunderhead clouds rolling in, impossibly fast. The desert dust is hit by silent bullets. Raindrops gathering and multiplying, soaking the sand dark, and then flowing into a groove and slit, being joined by other rivulets until water is running, finding its way along the jagged cracks in the ground.

Above us, the sky is furious black. Lightning arcs across the sky.

154 INT. CANYON. SUNSET.

154

Aron's sky darkens above him. He looks truly scared, has somehow found some energy. Gathers his possessions together. Sticks out his tongue to catch the drops.

ARON

Please God, not this. Not this.

155 EXT. DESERT. SUNSET.

155

Water is pouring into a bigger channel. We are with the water, being joined by other rivulets until in turn, we join a bigger water-course.

156 EXT. DESERT. SUNSET.

156

Another channel explodes as a volume of water engulfs it. The camera literally slips and slides as the water picks up speed, looking for release, for a gulley, for a - canyon.

- 157 INT. CANYON. SUNSET. 157
- The bottom of the canyon has become a river. It is surging down the natural pipe-work of the desert.
- 158 EXT. BLUE JOHN CANYON. S-SHAPED LOG. SUNSET. 158
- From below, we are looking at the S-shaped log as unimaginable tons of water come pouring suddenly over the lip of the canyon. The canyon becomes a six foot wall of churning mud and debris, hurtling downwards.
- 159 INT. CANYON. SUNSET. 159
- We see Aron in the distance, tugging at his arm. Water is bubbling up from the ground, forcing itself up through the sand between his feet. Without time to register, the wall of water hits him.
- 160 INT. CANYON. SUNSET. 160
- In an instant, he is engulfed with freezing water. Gasping at the cold, wrenching his head to one side to get out of the main force of the blast. He tries to gain height, but the water is filling the canyon by the second.
- ARON  
No, no, no, no.....
- His head is only just above the water level. He is going under. Takes a last few desperate breaths before the water closes over him.
- 161 INT. CANYON. UNDERWATER. SUNSET. 161
- We're with Aron underwater, in the churning, dark waters. Only Aron's head-lamp flashing around desperately.
- Then in the maelstrom of mud, we see the boulder shift. A thrashing of body. The arm pulls, tugs. And then, he is free.
- He steps on the boulder and powers upwards.
- Aron's face coming up, roaring for breath. Gasping, choking. Alive.
- 162 INT. CANYON. SUNSET. 162
- A hand appears from the slot, clutches at the canyon lip. Finds a hold. Pulls. Aron's exhausted body heaves itself half onto the plateau, rests on his stomach, heaving. Takes his damaged arm with his good arm and hauls it- like a dead thing- and slaps it over the lip.

163 EXT. WIDE CANYON. SUNSET.

163

Painfully, slowly, Aron rolls onto his back. Stares at the pink, orange, deep blue streaks in the sky. Heaves himself upright. Looks down at his hand.

Mottled white and grey, a dead surgical glove at the end of his arm.

Aron gets to his knees. His feet. Steadies himself for a long moment. And then starts to stagger forwards, a man learning to walk again. Grunting with pain and exhaustion.

164 EXT. STEEP SLOPE. NIGHT.

164

One-armed, Aron drags himself, painful inch by inch, from one step to another. He slumps upright, his head actually resting on the rock, eyes almost closed. On some auto-pilot.

He almost falls over the last holds. Lies on the ground, staring up at the stars in the sky.

A shooting star sparkles across the sky.

C/U: shooting star.

A blaze of burning rocks, white hot, tumbling impossibly through space.

C/U: ARON'S FACE.

A reflection of the star's trail in Aron's eye.

165 EXT. CAR PARK. NIGHT.

165

Aron is kneeling by the back door of his truck. His face is flush with the smooth metal, actually against it. A smile of love. He could be kissing it. But he's actually trying to unlock it, his face inches from the lock, his trembling hand wrestling with the keys. Eventually, he gets the key in. Turns it. Bliss.

166 EXT. CAR PARK. NIGHT.

166

Aron is sitting, slumped against his truck, drinking the bottle of Gatorade.

C.U of his throat as it gulps and gulps. Gatorade is running all over his face. He can't get it down fast enough. It is liquid pornography.

Aron pauses to groan with sheer delight. Looks down at his useless hand. Starts laughing and laughing. With relief, with delight.

167 INT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT.

167

Aron driving. One-handed. The pain is coming in waves that make him hunch over the wheel, but he keeps going.

Holds the steering wheel with his legs. Punches the radio. Music crashes in on us. A grimace of pleasure from Aron.

The occasional sign flashes past. Seems to leave a trace on his retina, on the screen.

168 EXT. TOWN. NIGHT.

168

Aron is driving through a large, deserted town. All the street signs and shop lights seem extra-bright, painful on the eye. These, too, are leaving a faint, hallucinogenic trace on the screen. Aron is clearly getting weak.

ARON

C'mon, c'mon. Nearly there.

169 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. NIGHT.

169

Aron gets out of his truck. Walks up the middle of the street. Lit from behind by streetlights, he strikes a battered but heroic figure as he strides towards us in silhouette. Turns into the drive of a house.

170 EXT. RANA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

170

Stands on the step. Gathers himself from the pain in his hand. Leans on the door, resting his head. Pulls back. Rings the bell.

ARON

Rana.

A light goes on. A cautious voice.

RANA O/S

Who's there?

ARON

Rana, it's Aron.

RANA O/S

Aron?

Rana opens the door. We see her standing there in all her beauty. Behind her the room is lit softly. A fire burns in the grate. It is a vision of intimacy, comfort, safety.

In slow motion, Rana smiles at Aron. She holds out her arms to him.

We see Aron's face. He is talking, but no sound is coming out of his mouth.

Rana keeps smiling. Steps to one side to invite him in.

Aron trying to communicate, trying to form words.

Rana's smile drops. She looks disappointed. Slowly, slowly, closes the door.

C/U: ARON'S FACE

Aron's lips are moving. He is desperately trying to say something.

171 INT. CANYON. NIGHT.

171

Aron's lips are still moving, desperately. But he is in the rope bag. He never went anywhere. Oh, Jesus.

He rips off the rope bag. Wailing, screams, cries. Finally, after so much control, so much order, this is despair. Naked, terrifying despair. A true rending of a soul gone beyond hope for release or rescue, into the darkest pit of loneliness. This is a man, dying on his own in the universe.

ARON

Oh, God, oh God, oh God....

Gradually the sobbing subsides. He is slumped by the boulder, encased in his own pity. Motionless for a long, long time.

172 EXT. CANYON. SUNRISE.

172

Hundreds of miles of canyon. The inner canyons change from dark umbers and black shadows to immense bands of pastel yellow, white, green and a myriad shades of red. A hallucinogenic movement towards light.

173 C/U: DIGITAL NUMERALS.

173

The massive numbers go from 6.59 to 7.00.

Title.

**Tuesday.**

174 INT. CANYON. SUNRISE. VIDEO MESSAGE THREE.

174

V/O

*Good morning, America!*

*There's a chorus of Good Mornings from a thousand American TV and radio shows from Texas to Oregon, Massachusetts to the Carolinas.*

ARON

*Good morning, everyone! It's seven o'clock in Canyonland, USA. Today, on the boulder, we've got a special guest - the self-styled American Superhero Aron Ralston. Shout it out, Aron!*

*Applause from the studio audience. Where the hell did they come from?*

*Flashes of Aron's photos. Hero poses on top of various snowy peaks, crags, on bikes with huge panoramas stretching away beneath him.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*Thank you! Pleasure to be here!*

*Suddenly, Aron has adopted the role of chat-show host, switching voices and persona with frightening dexterity.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*Can I say a big hi to Mom and Dad in Englewood, Colorado?*

ARON THE HOST

*Mom and Dad! Never forget Mom and Dad. Right, Aron?*

ARON

*Umm. Yeah. Sorry I didn't pick up the other night, Mom. Would have told you where I was going and - well - wouldn't be stuck here now, would I?*

ARON THE HOST

*Well, I always like to say, your supreme selfishness is our gain, Aron. Anyone else you'd like to say hi to?*



ARON

*Sure. Hi Brion at work! I'm not gonna make it in today, I'm afraid.*

*A big laugh from the audience.*

ARON THE HOST

*A question coming in from another Aron, this one in Loser Canyon, Utah. Aron asks: "am I right in thinking that even if Brion at work did notify the police, they'd put a 24 hour hold on it before filing a missing person's report, which means that you'd only become officially missing midday Wednesday at the earliest?"*

ARON

*Right on the money, Aron. So they'd get about four hours searching before dark, then they'd call it off until Thursday first light - by which time I'll be dead!*

ARON THE HOST

*And how do you know all of this, Aron from Loser Canyon, Utah?*

*Puts his finger to the invisible ear-piece as if talking to the questioner down the line.*

ARON

*Oh, well, I know all this 'cos I'm a volunteer in the rescue service- I'm something of a big, fucking, hard, hero. I can do it all. On. My. Own. You see?*

ARON THE HOST

*Yes, I do see. And is it true that despite, or maybe because you're a big, fucking, hard hero you neglected to tell anyone where you were going?*

ARON

*That is entirely correct.*

*A pause.*

ARON THE HOST

*Anyone?*

ARON

*Anyone.*

ARON THE HOST

*Oops.*

ARON

*Oops.**His unnaturally cheerful face falls as the energy seeps away. Stares straight into camera. Devastated.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*Mom, Dad, I really love you guys. I wanted to take this time to say the times we've spent together have been awesome. I haven't appreciated you in my own heart the way I know I could. Mom, I love you. I wish I'd returned all your calls. Ever.**I really have lived this last year.**Beat.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*Sonja, your wedding. Have a good one. Zach's a good guy. I know I promised I'd play at your wedding. We'd play. Real sorry about that.**Beat*

ARON (CONT'D)

*I wish I had learned some lessons more astutely, more rapidly, than I did. I love you guys. I'll always be with you.**Electronic static.*

175 INT. CANYON. DAY.

175

*Aron, slumped. A noise, a swoop of wings. He grabs the camera just in time to catch the very end of the raven's flight along the line of the canyon.*

ARON

*Shit. Missed it. 8.31. He's late. Still missed it.**We can hear his heart pounding. Unnaturally fast. He holds his hand to it, trying to calm it, slow it down.**A flash of a woman's finger tracing a circle on his naked chest where his heart lies.*

176 INT. CANYON. DAY.

176

*A hand plunging the multi-tool blade straight into his arm. Up to the hilt.*

He lets go, leaving the knife embedded. He swoons, and stares at it, the whole picture going blurred for a moment. He tightens the carabiner attached to the makeshift tourniquet on his upper arm then grasps the tool and wriggles it slightly. The blade connects with something hard. He taps the knife down and feels it knocking on the radius bone on his upper forearm.

He puts his ear close to his arm and wiggles the knife again. We hear the thocking noise.

ARON

Bone.

He pulls the knife out, opening the wound.

ARON (CONT'D)

No way.

Said with despair. Wipes the sweat away. So dry in the mouth, he is gagging. Pulls the lid off his water bottle. Shakes it. Drinks down the last precious drops.

Holds the bottle above his mouth to catch the final drops. Licks the inside as far as his tongue will reach. Screws the lid back on. Puts the bottle back down.

C/U: DIGITAL NUMERALS.

8.00

Loosens the tourniquet. Watches the blood come back into his arm.

Picks up the video camera.

177 INT. CANYON. DAY. VIDEO MESSAGE FOUR.

177

*Again, there's a touch of hysteria lurking in the delivery. A mixture of too formal and too wild.*

ARON

*At precisely eight AM, I finished the last of the water. The last of the clean water, anyway. Kinda gulped it down in response to... Tried cutting off my arm again... Let's just say it didn't go that well.*

*He swings the camera onto the bloody hole he has made in his arm.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*A short career in surgery as it turns out. Surprisingly little blood - I guess it's thickening up but... These knives. No way. The bone. Can't get through the bone. Blunt.*

(MORE)

ARON (CONT'D)  
*Next Christmas a proper Leatherman,  
 yeah, Mom? Next Christmas....*

*He shrugs.*

ARON (CONT'D)  
*Well, I tried.*

*Long pause.*

ARON (CONT'D)  
*Out of water.*

*An even longer pause.*

ARON (CONT'D)  
*I'm really fucked now.*

178 INT. CANYON. TWILIGHT.

178

Night is falling. Aron is slumped in his harness, leaning against the boulder. Perhaps for the first time we get the sense that he has given up.

179 INT. CANYON. NIGHT. REAL TIME.

179

Aron tips the Camelbak very cautiously towards his mouth. Takes a mouthful of urine. Retches. But keeps it down. Summons all his strength and takes another sip.

Retches again.

180 INT. ROPE BAG. NIGHT.

180

He holds the video camera at waist height and switches it to playback. He rewinds through his messages. Stops, switches off playback and rewinds the blue LCD screen to save battery. The light is surreal, soft LCD hell.

181 INT. DOME POOL. DAY. VIDEO FOOTAGE.

181

*Kristi and Megan. The Dome. They clamber out in wet clothes - it's from after their first jumps. We see all three of them climb and fall and get out of the water and climb and fall, smashing into the azure water.*

*Their faces are dripping wet, beaming mad, screaming and howling, completely natural, children really, on their first helter-skelter / Big Dipper.*

*He rewinds this time in vision. Kristi's bra and pants are soaking. Megan's top cascades water as she rises out of the water.*

182 INT. ROPE BAG. NIGHT.

182

For Aron the volume of his and their shouting is deafening and the first human sounds he has heard for days. He watches, staring, laughing; not laughing, staring, eyes tearing in self-pity.

C/U: VIDEO CAMERA

HE STOPS IT IN VISION

There's water, joy, 2 beautiful girls, happiness, sensuality, company, freedom...

183 INT. ROPE BAG. NIGHT.

183

He looks at the picture and then into the bag. His breathing is hard, pronounced. He carefully tells himself...

ARON

No. No. Don't.

He sees the moisture on the inside of the bag, condensation. He licks it with his sticky tongue, twice, three times. He looks back at the LCD screen.

The LCD looks back at him.

He kills the image and snaps it shut.

184 INT. CANYON. NIGHT.

184

Aron smashing at the rock.

185 INT. CANYON. NIGHT. 185

Aron decants his urine from the Camelbak into his water bottle.

CUT TO:

186 INT. CANYON. NIGHT. 186

The head-lamp is weak, almost dead on batteries. Aron is chipping at an entirely new area of rock. This is odd.

Then we see what he is chipping. His name and the date he was born. And the date he is going to die. He is chipping his own headstone. There is something jumpy about it. Missing frames. Unnatural.

187 INT. CANYON. NIGHT. 187

Rope bag on head, a bout of intense shivering.

188 INT. CANYON. NIGHT. 188

More fast-motion chipping. He stops. Utterly still. There's something in the dark behind him. Coming towards him?

189 BIG C/U. NIGHT. 189

Aron's eyes snap open from his micro-sleep.

190 INT. CANYON. NIGHT. 190

More crazed chipping. A noise. He turns. There's definitely something there.

He looks demented with silent fear. Fumbles for something in his sack. Pulls out his stills camera and charges the flash. We hear it humming as it charges.

The canyon bursts with light as his camera flash goes off. For a split second, in front of him stands the inflatable Scooby Doo, its arms waving madly at him. And then, blackness again. He charges the flash again. He flashes again. This time, empty canyon. Aron whimpers in the dark.

191 INT. CANYON. DAY.

191

Aron's head, lolling at the neck as if the muscles are gone, mouth open, staring up at the slot of blue sky above. Slowly, a 747 crosses the canyon; high, silver, untouchable. He watches it all the way. We can hear his heart racing. He holds his left hand to his heart, hoping to calm it down.

192 INT. STADIUM. NIGHT.

192

Thousands of people enjoying the basketball. Aron and Rana are in their midst and in the middle of a furious row. Aron's shoulder POV again.

RANA

(mad with frustration and pain)

If I go, if I get up from this seat, I'm not getting a fucking coke, Aron, I'm gone, you understand? You and me. Gone. Forever. Is that what you want? Huh?

Clearly, Aron is silent. She gets up, turns to let him stop her.

RANA (CONT'D)

Nothing. Rien. Fuck! You are frozen, you know that? Okay. Over.

She starts ramming her way past the spectators in the row.

193 INT. CANYON. DAY.

193

Aron imagines her brushing past and above him, reliving it. His hand is still on his heart, like the Pledge.

194 INT. STADIUM. NIGHT.

194

As Rana reaches the end of the row we see how upset she is. But her final comment is sad, not angry.

RANA

You're gonna be so lonely, Aron.

And she goes. Revealing him alone in the crowd. He is present in his POV scenes for the first time. It's shocking to see how healthy he is. And how embarrassed he is by the public row. He looks around the roaring stadium.

The crowd splits the screens, as at the beginning. Their faces smear, dragged and distorted from one screen to the next.

On one of the screens, Aron is alone in the canyon, looking at himself in the only empty seat amongst thousands.

INT/EXT VARIOUS

The rest of Wednesday and Wednesday night play out through the triptych. Repetition is used to create a trippy sense of losing coherence- sometimes there are three Arons doing the same thing. Sometimes, the past or the present are running on different sections of the triptych at the same time.

At key moments, it resolves to one image and then back again. Things seem to loop and his close-ups almost seem to watch the loops happening again and again. This is particularly true inside the rope bag at night. When his light is switched on, it's bleached and monstrously overlit, like cruel HD close-ups. Without water, his disintegration is terrifyingly fast.

When the head-lamp is off, we establish a night vision of green and blue that allows us to witness him in hiding. The images play out on the interior surface of the bag. The effect is like wraparound Imax, multi-screen Technicolor.

195

195

**LEFT SCREEN**

**MIDDLE SCREEN**

**RIGHT SCREEN**

Aron's foot  
in the dagger of  
sunlight. Beyond it  
we see someone,  
out of focus,  
carrying 2 huge  
office water  
dispensers by  
their necks. The man  
seems to be in cowboy  
gear. He comes up to  
Aron and puts them down.

**ARON:**  
**Thanks, Blue John.**

Aron chipping away  
at the rock...  
Chip, chip, chip.

**SONJA V/O:**  
(singsong,  
unconcerned)

**Aron...! Has anyone  
seen Aron?**

Aron drinks the Camelbak  
of piss. He retches,

Aron is falling  
again, slow, slow  
motion.

Big C/U of  
digital numbers  
as they move  
from 11.32 To  
11.33. A voice:

**MOM V/O:** (the  
sing-song of a  
long-ago hide-  
and-seek game)

**Aron? Where are  
you?**

Smeary footage  
of Aron  
hammering at the  
top of the knife  
with a shot-putt  
sized boulder.

**ARON: I hate  
this rock.**

But he keeps  
going.

A thousand  
drinks adverts



tries to keep it down.

VIDEO MESSAGE.

**ARON:** *It's no slurpee.*

A thermal imaging  
shot of Aron, the colours  
changing as the temperature  
crashes down.

flash by: Coca-  
Cola, 7-Up, beer,  
Kool Aid...

Huge digital  
thermometer  
numbers dropping  
54-53-52-51.  
C/U of Aron's  
terrified face.  
Eyes blinking.

The raven flies  
overhead. Aron's  
answer-phone.  
The red light  
huge in screen,  
blinking and  
blinking.

**MOM V/O:**  
**Just Mom here...**  
**hope you're**  
**having a good**  
**time....**

VIDEO MESSAGE:  
Digital shadows  
of what was on  
the tape  
originally -  
Aron ski-ing in  
dazzling  
sunlight - scar  
across screen  
and disappear.

**ARON:** *Rana, I've  
been thinking  
about you girl.*

*Beat.*

**ARON:**  
*One of the things  
I'm learning here  
is that I didn't  
enjoy people's  
company that I  
was with enough.  
Or as much as I  
could have.*

**ON ALL THREE SCREENS:**

A shaft of sunlight hits the canyon. Moves from left to  
right, crossing all three screens with pink, suffused, light.

**LEFT SCREEN**

Four hands on  
the piano. Sonja  
and Aron playing  
a duet: 'Heart

**MIDDLE SCREEN**

A small fire  
crackling and  
burning.  
Superimposed on

**RIGHT SCREEN**

VIDEO MESSAGE:

**ARON:**  
*A lot of really*

and Soul'. They  
are good.

the flames are  
digital numerals  
rising. 51-52-53..  
A hand puts a pot  
of beans on top of  
the fire. Stirs  
the pot. Rubs his  
hands together and  
toasts them.

*good people have  
spent time with  
me.....*

*Digital snow  
footage scars  
again. He is  
struggling to be  
coherent.*

Aron's friends  
appear in the canyon.  
Erik, Sonja, Mark,  
Jon, Brandon, Chip  
and Norm. They all  
walk towards...

**BLUE JOHN:**  
**Perfect for bacon  
and beans.**

**ARON:**  
*I wanted him...  
Rob... to respect  
me for my  
accomplishments...  
not for how I  
treat others...*

Aron's parents' sofa,  
which is sitting in  
the middle of the  
canyon right in the  
shaft of light. They  
sit on the sofa,  
stand behind it,  
perch on the arms.

Aron watches  
them, giving  
each one a  
spacey smile of  
recognition.

Smile at him.

**ARON:**  
**Erik, Jon, hi Erik  
.. Brandon, howya  
doing? Mark, long  
time man... Chip,  
Norm.. What's  
happenin'?**

#### **ON ALL THREE SCREENS:**

Aron's huge eyes blink in slow motion, changing the screens  
to:

#### **LEFT SCREEN**

The inflatable  
Scooby Doo waves  
eerily in the dark.

**KRISTI V/O:**  
**Why don't you come  
with us? Kick back  
and have a beer?**

The shot of Aron's  
Dad again, the  
glass of soda  
raised to his lips.

#### **MIDDLE SCREEN**

The disembodied  
camera wanders the  
party, searching  
into faces who  
smile politely but  
turn away.

#### **RIGHT SCREEN**

A table groaning  
with liquids.  
Beers, Margaritas  
juice.... Huge  
C/U of a bottle-  
opener cracking  
the top of a beer  
- the sharp  
little hiss of  
pleasure. It  
repeats again and  
again. Hiss,  
hiss, hiss.

We zoom in and in  
on the glass until  
it is just pixels.

**ON ALL THREE SCREENS:**

Aron drinks from the Camelbak, retching, swearing, gulping.

INT. CANYON

A Margarita hovering in the canyon.

**LEFT SCREEN**

**MIDDLE SCREEN**

**RIGHT SCREEN**

**VIDEO MESSAGE:**

*For the first time,  
inside the rope bag.  
It's night, but he's  
monstrously lit and  
deteriorating fast.*

**ARON:**  
*I'm holding on here,  
but time's going  
really slow. My  
heart's beating like  
crazy. I swear it's  
three times what it  
should be.*

*Aron's video of Megan  
and Kristi jumping  
into the pool runs  
backwards, backwards.*

Stills of Aron's  
many summits  
flash by.

Stills of him  
as a child with  
glasses, at  
school with  
even bigger  
glasses and at  
home as a baby.

A shot of Rana at  
the roof-top party,  
lit by God. The slow,  
stop-frame movement  
allows us to examine  
every inch of her  
throat, her mouth,  
her eyes as she slowly,  
slowly turns towards  
camera.

**RANA V/O:**  
**Glad you made it.**

Aron continues his  
**VIDEO MESSAGE** to  
camera. Slurry, but  
bright-eyed.

**ARON:**  
*Been doing a lot of  
thinking. Something  
amazing. Really.  
Amazing. This boulder.*

Huge, molten  
rocks tumble  
towards us out  
of the dark.  
Were one to  
hit us we

would be  
obliterated in  
an instant.

**RANA V/O:**  
**I love you.**

**ON ALL THREE SCREENS:**

A comet streaks fast across the screens, trailing an arc of impossibly beautiful fire and sparks.

**LEFT SCREEN**

**MIDDLE SCREEN**

**RIGHT SCREEN**

Aron continues his  
VIDEO MESSAGE.

**ARON:**

*This boulder's been  
waiting for me all  
my life. And all its  
life. Isn't that  
awesome? Since it was  
some bit of a*

*meteorite a million* **MOM V/O:**

*billion years ago.* **(Casual)**

*Up there in space.*

*Its been waiting. To* **Where is he?**  
*land here. Right here.*

*And me, I've been moving  
towards it all my life.*

The comet powers on.

The boulder. First  
as a photograph,  
then a computer  
generated 3D  
representation,  
rotating and  
spinning to show  
all its angles.

Finally a thermal  
imaging shot.

**ON ALL THREE SCREENS:**

Aron continuing the video message. He leans in, earnestly trying to convey this idea.

**ARON**

*My DNA brought me right here. From the  
minute I was born. Every breath I've  
taken, every act has been leading to  
this. To this little crack in the  
earth's surface. To this boulder.*

**LEFT SCREEN**

**MIDDLE SCREEN**

**RIGHT SCREEN**

**ARON:**

**ARON:**

**ARON:**

**Cosmic.**

**Incredible.**

**Beautiful.**

On all three screens, he smiles.

**LEFT SCREEN****MIDDLE SCREEN****RIGHT SCREEN**

On all three panels, we see different images of Mom, Dad, Sonja and Rana, mixing and merging places on the screen. Aron is oblivious to the voices. He is chipping away at the rock.

RANA V/O  
There he is!

MOM V/O  
He's over here!

SONJA  
(sing song)  
Found you!

**ON ALL THREE SCREENS:**

The sun spills onto Aron's head. He lolls back, bathing in it.

196

INT. CANYON. DAY.

196

ARON  
Sorry about the wedding.

INT. SOFA CHAMBER.

Sonja sits on the sofa in the canyon.

**ON ALL THREE SCREENS:****LEFT SCREEN****MIDDLE SCREEN****RIGHT SCREEN**

A montage of video messages, scratchy static in between.

ARON (CONT'D)  
8.15. No raven....8.20....No raven.  
8.30....My raven didn't come. So. I  
guess that's it.

Rana at the  
baseball game  
Turning to camera.

The blinking  
red light of  
answer-phone.

**RANA:**  
**You're gonna be**  
**So lonely, Aron.**

**ON ALL THREE SCREENS:**

Aron shivering in the rope bag:

INT. ROPE BAG. NIGHT.

*Electronic static for a moment.*

*The screen comes back to life again, focussed on Aron again. He is struggling to communicate through his slow death.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*All of this. It all makes sense.  
Everything comes together. Me, I chose  
it. Chose to turn away from everyone.  
Chose... this. Sort of perfect, really.*

*He's fading out, like a radio station out of range. Pulls himself back for one last effort.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*This is important. I need you all to  
understand. Every one of you. I need you  
to understand that it's okay. All of  
this...*

*He smiles at the camera. A brave, unmanic, genuine smile.*

ARON (CONT'D)

*I'm- I'm cool with it. At peace. It's  
okay. It's alright. Really. Everything.  
Is. Alright.*

*And he clicks the camera off.*

BLACK.

*Out of the darkness we are gradually aware that we are staring at the liquid black of Aron's eyeball. It blinks once. You can hear it. Eye socket rasping against eyeball.*

*A rumbling thunderous sound grows and grows as the three panels turn into **two**.*

#### LEFT SCREEN

*When it can get no louder a horse leaps the 6 ft gap at the top of the canyon. It's followed by dozens of horses stampeding across his roof.*

#### RIGHT SCREEN

*Aron shakes uncontrollably. There's dust everywhere. Parts of his face seem to slowly implode. It's as though he's decaying into dust.*

EXT. SKY. DAY. SINGLE SCREEN.

*Through a veil of dust we can just see the raven beat its wings across the canyon.*

197

INT. CANYON DAY. WIDE. **HALF** OF DOUBLE SCREEN.

197

#### LEFT SCREEN

#### RIGHT SCREEN

Aron's body mass seems to collapse in a soft explosion of dust, fine as chalk.

C/U: Inside the bag, the dry decay has almost obliterated his face entirely.

198 INT. CANYON. DAY. SINGLE SCREEN. 198

Ants move across Aron's lifeless face. No movement at all.

199 INT. CANYON. DAY. 199

A shaft of sunlight beyond him in the open canyon turns the screen glowing pink, orange, golden. The sound of a giggle. Definitely a giggle. The laugh of a happy, small child.

200 BIG C/U. 200

Aron's eye slowly opens.

201 INT. CANYON. DAY. SINGLE SCREEN. 201

Aron lifts the rope-bag off his face.

202 INT. OPEN CANYON. DAY. 202

Standing right in the glare of the sunlight, stands a small boy. Right next to the sofa on which Aron's friends gathered earlier. He can't be more than three years old. Standing there in a red polo shirt. The boy smiles at him.

203 INT. CANYON. DAY. 203

Aron stares back at him. A figure walks to join the boy in the open canyon. It's Aron. The sunlight hitting his face like a train. We can't see his damaged arm, but it is clear that he is free. He keeps moving towards the boy. And the boy starts towards him, running until Aron crouches and lifts him, laughing into the sun.

204 INT. CANYON. DAY.

204

Aron stares at them playing, at them prancing around and on the sofa, pretending to walk downhill behind the sofa. A happy day. Like any father and his son.

He stretches towards the image, yearning. His arm stops him, but he keeps stretching. When he looks back to the open canyon, only the boy is there now. Sitting. Smiling.

Aron stretches further, using his feet to push him up over the rock.

Aron blinks and the boy is gone.

Suddenly, Aron is wide awake, focussed. He feels his arm with his good hand. Contorts himself so that he is weighting the trapped arm.

205 INT. BONE. DAY.

205

We are watching the bleached-white bone of Aron's radius in startling close up. Stripped of blood and sinew, it is pure and beautiful bone. And when Aron leans towards the boy, it bends.

206 INT. CANYON. DAY.

206

ARON

Yes. Yes!

He pulls and pulls with his left hand over the boulder, creating maximum upward force on his right arm. Starts bouncing. Hard, harder. His teeth are clamped shut. No sound.

**POW.**

Like a gunshot in the canyon, the bone breaks. The sound echoes. He looks at the bone pushing down against the skin. He touches the jagged edge. No sound.

Amazingly, he smiles.

ARON (CONT'D)

Well, you're in it now.

He humps his body down and under the chockstone, smearing with his feet against the wall. He pushes his body further and further round the dark side of the chockstone with a silent, furious intensity.

**BANG.**



A second gun shot echoes around the canyon. He's sweating heavily and yet has a euphoria in his eyes. He checks the underneath of his arm. Yep, another broken bone. A yelp of laughter escapes.

He can rotate his forearm as if it's a shaft inside a housing.

Still, he makes no sound. There is a high-pitched ringing in his ears. Nothing else.

207 INT. CANYON. DAY.

207

Picks up the knife. Pauses, with the blade above his wrist. Here we go. He pushes the knife hard to the hilt in between two veins in his wrist.

Sweat pouring out of him. His tongue flicks out automatically to catch the occasional drop.

Sawing downwards, he makes as large a hole as he can without tearing any of the noodle-like veins. He puts the knife in his teeth and pokes his left forefinger and thumb inside his right arm.

Drops of sweat falling on the knife blade.

He pulls muscle up, nearer the surface, allowing his knife to slice and pare away at a fragment of muscle bit by bit. It takes a dozen actions, each time the knife goes back to his teeth so his free hand can arrange the meat.

Sort. Pinch. Rotate. Slice.

Blood flows, though surprisingly little. He stops briefly to twist up the tourniquet.

Silence.

208 INT. CANYON. DAY.

208

He can't cut the tendon, no matter how hard he slices. But nothing will stop his addiction to surgery now. He fold in and swaps the blades for the pliers. He uses them to bite into an edge of the yellowy tendon. Then squeezing and twisting, he tears away a fragment.

Grip. Squeeze. Twist. Tear.

Finally, he tears the last fibre of tendon. Stares at his handiwork. With a sniff of satisfaction, returns to his knife blade.

209 INT. CANYON. DAY.

209

Finally, all that remains inside is a pale white strand. Like a swollen length of angel-hair pasta. The nerve.

He touches it gently with the blade of his knife.

ARON  
Aaaagggggghhhhhh!

After so long in silence, the scream is shocking, long and utterly terrifying. He's stunned. Stock-still with fear.

210 INT. CANYON. DAY.

210

He stares at the nerve. The nerve looks back. It's like a Mexican stand-off. It could go on all day.

211 INT. CANYON. DAY.

211

Out of the corner of his eye, the boy is there. Smiling patiently. Aron whips his head around. The boy is gone. But he definitely saw him.

ARON  
Just this.

He pulls the knife in and pulls it towards him: an inch, two inches. It lengthens like pulling a guitar string. Unimaginable pain builds in his body until finally the nerve snaps. And Aron snaps.

ARON (CONT'D)  
Aaaagghh.

Retching, slumps in a heap, head lolling forward, his head buzzing and ringing with trauma.

212 C/U: DIGITAL NUMERALS.

212

The numbers flick fast. There's ten minutes gone in a flash. The numbers slow... and stop.

213 INT. CANYON. DAY.

213

He's back upright, cutting, sawing, stretching the skin like he's a butcher, using the canyon wall as his chopping block. Huge energy suddenly. Sweat running in his eyes, blurred vision, rasping, parched breathing.

And then he's staggering backwards. Free. His hand, just stuck there, a stump in the crack. He stares at it, wild-eyed. He's out here. And his hand is in there. Weird.

His head is swarming with colours, his legs faltering like a new foal. He stumbles up to the canyon wall. Stares close at his own obituary: Aron Oct 75 - April 03 RIP.

ARON

Aron, you are not dying here.

214 INT. CANYON. DAY.

214

Aron is busy. Wrapping his arm in the plastic grocery sack and then wrapping that with the yellow webbing he wore around his neck to keep himself warm at night. He stuffs his arm into the empty Camelbak pack and throws the straps around his neck to make a sling.

Packs his bag, water reservoir, video, pocket knife. Grabs his climbing rope and heads off down the canyon.

Turns. Goes back. Takes the camera from the outside pouch of his sack and takes a photograph of the boulder - and his severed hand.

Looks up, around, searching for somebody.

ARON

Thank you.

215 INT. CANYON. DAY.

215

The motion and energy of the action movie returns.

It's like Ray Liotta's final day in Goodfellas; relentless, frustrating, pressure of life again now he's free from his tomb. Deeper and deeper he goes, twisting and turning through the scoops of sandstone, his rope trailing behind him a hundred feet. We follow its progress snaking after him.

Specks of blood on the canyon walls.

216 INT. TIGHT SLOT. DAY.

216

He stops at the top of a squeeze that drops to the canyon floor. He takes a couple of hyper-ventilating breaths and just throws himself down it.

Gets to his feet. Stumbles on. Nothing will stop him. Not even...

217 INT. SQUEEZE. DAY.

217

We see him nudging his shoulders along the squeeze, each contraction forward sending waves of pain shuddering through him. His teeth are set in a grimace, almost a snarl.

218 INT. CANYON. DAY.

218

The canyon becomes a chute, increasingly steep, deep and dark. But at the end, there is a glow of light, pink, red, soft, getting brighter by the step. He stumbles forward, the rope whipping around the corners. Faster and faster until....

219 EXT. ROCK SHELF. DAY.

219

....we burst into dazzling midday sun on a rock shelf perched dizzyingly high above the canyon floor. It's a two hundred foot sheer drop to the bottom. Vast cliffs face him opposite.

He drinks in the sun, the space. Stumbles over to the edge. Sees...

Water. A stagnant pool of black water.

Turns back, suddenly desperate, rabid. Is searching the rock for something. Doesn't take long to find two clean, shiny, metal bolts drilled into the rock. Gets down on his knees and kisses them as he were the Pope on new soil.

Teeth biting at the knots in the rope. Sand all over his lips, blood on his face from the amputation.

Every single knot must be untied with his good hand and his teeth. Stops, suddenly overwhelmed with thirst and exhaustion. Reaches into his pack and pulls out the Camelbak. Empties urine all over his head. He is licking and retching all at the same time. Stops. Instantly.

He can hear a noise. We can hear a noise. A shuffling, zipping sound. The rope is uncoiling over the edge, running faster and faster. There's only a few feet left.

He lunges across the ledge and catches it just in time. Lies there whimpering.

220 EXT. ROCK SHELF. DAY.

220

Aron inches over the edge. Difficult rappelling with one arm. His feet skid sideways.

A yell of pain and he is spinning down the rope, hurtling out of control towards the pool of water. This is the end.

221 EXT. CANYON. POOL. DAY.

221

He hits the pool with a crash.

222 EXT. ROCK SHELF. DAY

222

But he is back at the top of the rappel. Nothing happened. We see him control his worst, last fear. Inching slowly, his feet walk their way carefully down the rock. His eyes never leave the pool of dirty water, and that is our focus too.

223 EXT. POOL. DAY.

223

His feet gently touch the sandy floor, still tied to the rope. He staggers to the pool and buries his head in it. Dead leaves, insects, just two inches of undrinkable water. But he drinks it, bathes his head in it. Drinks again. The sounds coming out of his mouth are half cave-man, half ecstasy.

Kneeling in the water, he pulls out the map. Gets up and staggers off. Turns, comes back and scoops up water into his water bottle. Drinks another litre with huge gulps of pleasure.

224 EXT. CANYON. DAY.

224

He walks, shedding any weight that might slow him down. Carabiners, his harness, the rope, all dropped behind him without a thought. Blood is seeping from the stump of his arm onto his shirt. Every so often, he stops and drinks deep from the water bottle and the Camelbak.

225 EXT. CANYON. DAY.

225

Aron zig-zags the canyon from one stagnant pool to another. He finds a smear of dripping water on a vertical cliff and puts his lips to it and sucks.

226 EXT. CANYON. DAY.

226

A series of jump cuts as he walks, his progress measured in blood; first on his shorts, then spreading and dripping down his leg and then dripping onto the sand. A trail of drops behind him.

At a junction with another canyon entrance he stops, pulls the photocopied map out of his pocket, looks woosily around. Staggers on.

We are focussed on his shoes pushing through the sand. He only has one sock on and the bare foot is rubbed raw by the sand. He is limping badly.

227 INT. HORSESHOE CANYON. DAY.

227

Finally, he comes to the Great Gallery. A 330 foot long wall with dozens of broad-shouldered figures painted and chipped into the rock by strangers 3000 years ago.

The heat and his condition makes everything shimmer. He stops. He salutes them in his own way and then limps on.

228 EXT. HORSESHOE CANYON. DAY.

228

Seventy yards on, there are three more alien figures- tiny heads and elongated bodies. Cave paintings come alive?

He tries to shout, but nothing comes out. Another attempt, lost in the vastness of the canyon. The figures are disappearing in the shimmer.

ARON

Help!

The figures stop. Turn.

ARON (CONT'D)

Help!

A terrible pause.

ARON (CONT'D)

Help me! I need help!

The figures begin to run towards him. We watch his face in close up as they come. Tears come, now as the shimmering figures shape themselves into the first real people he has seen for five days.

ARON (CONT'D)

My name is Aron Ralston. I was trapped by a boulder on Saturday and I've been without food or water for five days. I cut my arm off this morning. I need medical attention. My name is Aron Ralston...

They look at this refugee from a horror movie. He is staring at the water bottles hanging from their waist belts. This gives them a way into his world. The moment is broken as they hurry to offer him water. He pours it down his throat, bypassing the swallow mechanism entirely.

229 INT. TV STUDIO. DAY. ERIC MEIJER'S TESTIMONY.

229

Eric's English is almost perfect, although accented. His family sit around him on comfy chairs in a tv studio.

ERIC MEIJER

We are the Meijers from Holland. At the start of the trailhead, we talked to a ranger who told about a car that was parked in the area already for several days and the owner might be missing in the canyon. We joked that we would keep our eyes completely open. After a hike of five point three kilometers to the Great Gallery, we returned after taking photographs and suddenly heard a noise behind us. Monique and I immediately realised that this had to be the missing person. We didn't find him, he found us! We gave him our water and Oreos.

230

EXT. HORSESHOE CANYON. DAY.

230

Back now live as Aron wolfs down the cookies and organises the well-meaning but freaked Meijers. Aron is brutally practical.

ARON

Phone. Do you have a phone?

ERIC

Yes, but no signal. You should stop and rest.

ARON

No, need to keep moving. Need a helicopter. Who can run fastest? You. Go fast. Take him.

Monique runs ahead with Andy, her son.

ARON (CONT'D)

Got more water?

ERIC

No.

Aron makes a disgusted tutting. Gets up and starts limping forward again. Eric follows on behind, flapping ineffectually around him, trailing in the wake of this machine for living. After a while, he glances behind.

ARON

Keep up.

Nobody for six days and then people start turning up like London buses. Another couple.

ARON (CONT'D)

Water. I need your water.

Dan hands over his water bottle. Aron drinks and drinks.

ARON (CONT'D)  
Cell. Do you have a cell?

DAN  
No. I'm Dan. I have some medical training.

ARON  
Is it okay to drink so much water?

DAN.  
Sure, so long as you don't vomit.

Aron drinks more and more. He overhears....

DAN. (CONT'D)  
Make sure he doesn't pass out.

ARON  
I gotta empty my shoes. Blister. My foot's killing me.

DAN.  
Your *foot*?

Aron is utterly oblivious to this.

231 INT. TV STUDIO. DAY. ERIC MEIJER'S TESTIMONY.

231

ERIC  
He cuts off his arm and his *foot* is killing him?

232 EXT. CANYON. DAY.

232

ARON  
You'll have to re-tie the laces.

As he sits, his head slumps forward. He's absolutely motionless. Eric tries to talk to him, but there's a pop song in his head and he can barely hear him.

ERIC  
Aron, are you okay? Stay with us, Aron.

DAN  
Jesus, he's asleep. Aron! Wake up!

Aron pulls his head up and sees in front of him a vision coming from the sky. Whirling and screaming, dust blasting everywhere. A helicopter.



233 EXT. HELICOPTER. DAY.

233

Very subjective, woozy camera moves as a strange, slightly formal man pops out of the helicopter. He almost looks like he's part of the Matrix. All of this seen from Aron's befuddled perspective.

MAN  
Are you Aron?

ARON  
Aron Ralston. Can I get a lift?

The man smiles at him in a strange way.

MAN  
I guess so.

Aron looks at the beautiful white leather seats before he gets in the chopper. Surreal. He touches them with his hands.

ARON  
I'm gonna make a terrible mess of your seat.

PILOT  
Just get in buddy.

The helicopter sucks upwards into the sky leaving Dan and Eric far below.

234 EXT. / INT. HOSPITAL. DAY.

234

The helicopter and gurney staff transfer him into the medic room. He is surrounded by vertical giants and he lies horizontal for the first time in six days.

ARON  
Thank you for bringing me back.

BURLY MAN  
That's all your miracle days used up kid. You can buy everyone a drink later.

The Burly Man turns away, his job done.

ARON  
Wait.

The Burly Man turns.

ARON (CONT'D)  
Will you look after this for me?

He puts something into his hand: a small, folded knife. Aron's eyes close.

235

INT. HOSPITAL. DAY.

235

Very soft light, a different place to the emergency room. Through diffused light we perceive a figure sitting by the curtains reading letters.

ARON  
(dry, barely a whisper)  
Mom.

MOM  
Hey...

She goes over to him.

MOM (CONT'D)  
Welcome back, Aron.

He squints at her. She immediately understands, reaches to the table beside him, picks up a pair of glasses and puts them on his face.

MOM (CONT'D)  
Your spare pair from home. Dad's on his way from New York.

ARON  
I'm so sorry.

MOM  
Aron Ralston, you ever do that to me again and I swear I'll break both your legs.

He looks down at the clean bandages, the place where his hand should be, realises for the first time that a new life starts here. Suddenly scared, his eyes fill with tears.

ARON  
Oh, Mom, what am I gonna do?

MOM  
You're my son. You're alive. That's all that matters for now.

Title:

**1000 HOURS LATER**

236 INT. UNDERWATER. DAY.

236

Underwater. A figure dives in, pulling strong breast strokes down and towards us. It's Aron, fully recovered after surgery. Eyes open, he pulls and pulls down through crystal clear, oxygenated water. He pulls again releasing a huge chunk of air into a metallic bubble.

237 INT. PRESS CONFERENCE. DAY.

237

A room crammed with journalists all baying, shooting off flash guns, waving microphones at him. Sandwiched between his Mom and Dad behind a table, Aron can't hear any of it, just his own heart beating. He stares with a dazed smile on his face.

238 EXT. POOL. DAY.

238

We can see him underneath us, swimming along the floor of the pool, like a diver building lung capacity.

239 INT. WEDDING. DAY.

239

A wedding. Sonja, Aron's sister and Zach her groom. We are at the reception. Hugging, laughing, drinking, toasting. Life in all its ordinariness and wonder.

ARON'S DAD

This is a day every Father prays for.  
His beautiful daughter married to a fine  
boy - yes, you're still a boy, Zach -

Laughter from the crowd.

ARON'S DAD (CONT'D)

- but today is particularly special for  
Donna and myself. A day we thought might  
never happen. Not only do we welcome a  
new son into our family, but we have *our*  
son back. Which makes us the luckiest -  
and happiest - parents in the United  
States of America.

There is applause from the crowd. Aron raises his Margarita glass in acknowledgement, though it's clear he'd rather not be the centre of attention.

240 EXT. POOL. DAY.

240

Aron deep under water. Pull and kick. Wanting oxygen now.

241 INT. RECEPTION HALL. SIDE ROOM. DAY.

241

The reception is well underway. Sonja pulls Aron out of the main room towards a piano beneath the stairs.

SONJA

Look what I found.

SONJA (CONT'D)

You promised.

ARON

Yeah, but-

SONJA

- the only butt is sitting right here.

And she plonks him down on the piano stool.

SONJA (CONT'D)

Move up.

He scoots along and she sits down next to him.

ARON

Sonja, this is crazy, I-

SONJA

- you can.

She places her hands on the keyboard. He looks at her. Puts his hands on the keyboard. Three human fingers and one titanium one. She counts them both in with her head.

SONJA (CONT'D)

And....

They start. The note C played three times. C, C, C. Tentative. They're really concentrating. C, B, A, B, C, D. The music is becoming clear: it's the piano tune from the film *Big- Heart and Soul*. That simple, melody full of childlike charm.

E, E, E. They are beginning to flow.

E, D, C, D, E, F. They almost stumble but recover. On to the high notes.

G, C....

And onto the finish: A, G, F, E, D, C...with a flourish as Aron jumps the octaves with his titanium finger. And Sonja and Aron's faces split into the widest of grins.

SONJA (CONT'D)  
 Promise kept.

She kisses his cheek and is away, leaving Aron staring at the keyboard.

242 INT. UNDERWATER. DAY. 242  
 Aron is pushing for the surface, kicking hard, up, up towards the sunlight.

243 INT. ARON'S TRUCK. NIGHT. 243  
 Aron driving.

244 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. NIGHT. 244  
 Aron parks up. Gets out of the truck. We might recognise the street.

245 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. NIGHT. 245  
 We definitely recognise it now. It's the same street he walked up in his head- to Rana's house.

246 EXT. RANA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. 246  
 Knocks on the door. Stands back. Everything's the same as before, but different. Different colours, different sizes. The memory street and house have become a real street and house.  
 The door opens.

RANA  
 Aron! My God.

Runs at him and folds him a huge hug. Keeps on hugging until there's barely any breath left in him. And he hugs back. Finally, she disengages and wipes the tears from her eyes.

RANA (CONT'D)  
 You total fucker, Aron Ralston.

They laugh. She takes his hand and takes him inside.

247 INT. RANA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

247

RANA  
My famous Margarita. Coming right up.

Rana is mixing drinks in the kitchen. From the living room, he watches her. She moves beautifully.

She comes through with the drinks. Hands him a glass.

RANA (CONT'D)  
What are we toasting? Multi-tools?

ARON  
The future.

RANA  
Why not?

They chink glasses.

ARON  
So, you and Tom broke up?

RANA  
Nearly one year ago. Still friends,  
but...

248 EXT. RANA'S APARTMENT. ROOFTOP. LATER.

248

They are sitting opposite each other sipping their Margaritas. The sofa and deck chairs are still there, and so are the snow-capped mountains.

ARON  
I'm gonna finish the fourteeners this  
winter or next.

RANA  
Solo?

ARON  
Yeah.

RANA  
Huh.

ARON  
I need to do it.

RANA  
Sure.

ARON  
Before. I couldn't let anyone in. I know  
that.

RANA

Didn't have to be anyone, Aron. Just me.

ARON

I know.

Silence.

ARON (CONT'D)

Rana, there's something that I haven't told anyone. When I was in the canyon, before I did it, when I thought I was dead, I was hallucinating and I saw this child, a little boy -

RANA

Not Jesus please...

ARON

He looked like my cousin CJ, but way too young ...not him. Somebody else. I knew he was mine- my child- and that this was what lay in front of me. My future. Rana, this little boy, he - he saved me. Do you see? I thought maybe...

He looks at her. She doesn't say anything.

ARON (CONT'D)

But it's not going to be you, is it?

She takes his hands in hers, smiles sadly.

RANA

No, Aron, it's not.

ARON

No.

RANA

Everyone who cares for you, a little bit of them dies each time you go back out there.

Rana leans over and tenderly kisses his cheek.

TRIPTYCHS.

The screen splits into three panels again.

249 INT. UNDERWATER. DAY.

249

He surges up and out of the water, takes a huge breath of air. We see he is right next to the edge of the pool.

250

EXT. POOL. DAY.

250

There in front of him on the grass by the pool is the same sofa as in the canyon. On it and around it, his friends and family. There's so many of them they fill the screen, all looking at him.

He looks right back at them and smiles.

On the panel next to Aron is a close up of the boy he saw in the canyon.

CARD 1:

**"Aron's premonition came true."**

**"He met his wife, Jessica, three years later."**

We see what has conjured the smile. The sofa has lost its crowds. Now, sitting there, is the real Aron Ralston. Next to him sits his wife, Jessica, holding a tiny baby in her arms.

CARD 2:

**"Their son, Leo, was born in February, 2010."**

The actor, Aron, smiles at the scene in front of him. The past and present greeting the future, fiction greeting fact.

CARD 3:

**"Aron continues to be a climber and canyoneer"**

Mixed into the split screen, a wintry scene of Aron on a mountain ridge struggling through deep snow away from camera. The thin rope snakes from us to him.

The screen fades to black.

CARD 4.

**"He always leaves a note to say where he has gone".**

END CREDITS