

SEARCHLIGHT

FADE IN:

EXT DESERT HIGHWAY - DAWN

Beneath a jukebox-colored sky a wary coyote urinates on a road sign:

SEARCHLIGHT

ELEV 35 POP 4572

EXT SEARCHLIGHT

A neglected little jerkwater in the hinterlands of the American Southwest.

A searchlight on the high ground overlooks the dusty burg. The high intensity beam sweeps obliviously across the gray chaparral.

A warning? A beacon?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT PRISON DORMITORY - DAY

TORI BRIGGS, athletic and striking, slips on her bra.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VELMA, clad in prison issue, sits on her bed SOBBING.

TORI
You're not making this easy.

Tori tries to ignore her weeping cell mate as she finishes dressing in civilian clothes.

TORI (cont'd)
Time to go.

Velma pulls herself together and walks over to Tori.

VELMA
Take care of yourself.

Tori draws Velma close and kisses her.

EXT STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY BUS STOP - DAY

Tori stands waiting with a few other parolees and prison employees.

A shuttle bus stops. The passengers board.

INT BUS

Tori goes to the back and finds an empty seat.

SQUIRRELY joins her as the driver pulls out.

SQUIRRELY
Feels good, don't it.

TORI
What?

SQUIRRELY
Bein' free.

TORI
Yeah, Squirrely. It's great.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SQUIRRELY

Hey, listen, Tori, now that we're out,
don't call me Squirrely any more, okay?
That was just my name inside.

TORI

Yeah sure. I don't care. What do you want
me to call you, Squirrely?

SQUIRRELY

Darleen. That's my real name. Darleen
Johnson.

TORI

Darleen.

SQUIRRELY

So no one was here to pick you up either,
huh? Momma would've come for me, but I
know that Frank wouldn't let her. He says
I'm sin sick. He's the one called the
cops on me. Bet you didn't know that,
huh? How about you, got any family?

TORI

A husband. Johnnie.

SQUIRRELY

Guess you're looking forward to seeing
him again aren't you?

TORI

It's all I've thought about for the last
eight years.

EXT HIGHWAY

The shuttle bus pulls out from the service road and onto the
thoroughfare.

In the opposite lane a red Cadillac races past in the other
direction.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT ANOTHER STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - LATER

The Cadillac turns on to a county road and heads into the desert.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT TWO-LANE DESERT ROAD

The red Cadillac rockets down a desolate stretch of blacktop. Fishtailing through the rippling heat, swerving from side to side.

The car slues wildly and skids to a stop.

ANOTHER ANGLE

SCREAMING and SHOUTING from inside the car.

The passenger door flies open and CRYSTAL is roughly shoved out.

Her macrame bag comes flying out after her as she lies on the side of the road.

She rolls out of the way as the Caddie burns rubber and disappears into the distance.

CLOSER

Crystal gets to her feet and stands forlornly. Young and pretty. Tears streaming down her bruised cheek.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Alone and thirsty in the middle of nowhere, Crystal starts walking.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

Still walking. Still no cars in sight. The desert heat is brutal.

DISSOLVE TO:

STILL LATER

A VW van appears.

Desperate, Crystal stands in the middle of the highway and flags down the approaching bus.

POV VIDEO CAMERA VIEWFINDER THROUGH WINDSHIELD OF VAN -
MOVING

Crystal waves until the van comes to a stop.

She goes to the passenger side.

Crystal opens the door. She's taken aback by the camera pointed at her.

CRYSTAL

Uh ... hi ...

ALEC

Go ahead. Just be natural.

CRYSTAL

Uh. Could you give me a ride?

INT VOLKSWAGEN VAN

ALEC VAN METER lowers the video camera.

ALEC

Where're you going?

CRYSTAL

Anywhere. The nearest bus station'll be okay.

ALEC

What are you doing out here?

CRYSTAL

Look, could you just give me a ride?

(CONTINUED)