To Spit in God's Eye

by Bill Donovan

PREPARED FOR
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DATE
November 8, 2026

SUBMITTED LENGTH
119 pages

FORMAT
Feature screenplay

GENRE
Supernatural folk horror with environmental thriller and moral reckoning drama; tone is simultaneously satirical, comedic, dread-laden, and elegiac, rooted in specific California landscape and colonial history.

Page references in this report cite your script as uploaded.

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OVERALL ASSESSMENT

This is a focused revision, not a major rewrite. The screenplay is genuinely accomplished: its supernatural logic is original, its voice is consistent, its resolution structure earns its hopefulness, and its ending image is exactly right. The problems are real but they share one root, and fixing that root will not require dismantling anything that works.

The central issue is that Jules Navarro's passivity is partly the script's subject and partly its structural liability, and the script has not yet made those two things work together cleanly. Jules is designed to show us the horror of non-action, and that is correct. But four versions of the same failure, over 104 pages, without differentiating the stakes of each refusal or forcing her into one choice that costs her something immediate, asks the Eye confession to carry a transformation the film has not built toward through crisis. The confession works emotionally, but it works despite the structure rather than because of it.

Everything else is performing. The dialogue is the script's most reliable technical instrument. Elwood's back room scene is the intellectual and emotional heart of the film and should not be touched. The kills are thematically exact. The grizzly with the old lasso still cutting into its fur is the kind of image that justifies the enterprise.

The next draft has three priorities: differentiate Jules's four failures so their escalation is legible, give Lena active dramatic function in act two beyond moral correction, and examine the Lum Chee sequence for consistency with the film's established register.

The script runs approximately 119 pages, which is acceptable for this genre and tone. No significant cutting is indicated, though tightening the social comedy stretch between pages 36 and 55 would recover about five to seven pages.

THE STORY ON THE PAGE

This is our reconstruction of the story your submitted work actually communicates, and it forms the basis for the analysis that follows. It is not a full marketing synopsis.

If our description differs from what you intended, don't automatically assume the submitted work is wrong, or that the analysis is right. But examine the discrepancy. If the story can reasonably be read this way, another reader may read it that way too.

On a Friday in late September, Jules Navarro, a 28-year-old paralegal at a Los Angeles land-use firm, drives up to Big Bear Lake with her employer's son Tanner Wolcott and his weekend party. Tanner has just won county approval for a luxury glamping development on a pebble plain, a rare Ice Age ecosystem that also contains a Serrano ancestral village site. The tribe's formal objection letter, written by cultural monitor Lena Avila, arrived at the firm in July. Grant Wolcott suppressed it. Jules read it, photographed it, and shredded it. She has been carrying the photo in her phone's Recently Deleted folder ever since.

That Friday night, the firm's surveyor Wade Pruitt cuts through a manzanita thicket on the pebble plain and is consumed by it. He had spit tobacco juice into a grinding stone mortar that afternoon. The group learns of his death but accepts the official "animal attack" report. That night, Devin and Bex sneak into Kettle Springs, a fenced sacred hot spring, light illegal fireworks that start a fire on the north shore, and enter the pool. The water boils. Devin dies. Bex escapes, badly burned. The fire runs toward Fawnskin. A freak September blizzard, predicted by amateur weatherman Gil Hartsock and disbelieved by everyone, extinguishes it.

Saturday, the deaths continue. Sloane livestreams herself chipping quartz from the Eye of God, a sacred dome on a hillside, and the stone detonates. Max, who has been secretly looting archaeological sites

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across two years, flies his drone over a protected eagle nest on Delamar Mountain; the eagle attacks him, and that night he slides his Jeep off the road above Horse Thief Canyon and is taken by a mountain lion while trying to retrieve his case of stolen artifacts. Cole, drunk and armed with Tanner's father's pistol, drives to the ghost-town meadow at Belleville to dig for the Wells Fargo gold of Greek George, his ancestor. Greek George's victim Lum Chee, tired rather than vengeful, kills him with a knife Cole's bullets pass through.

That night, Cass Merrow, the local detective who has been working the deaths, brings Jules and Elwood Tibbs, an 81-year-old local historian, together. In Elwood's back room, the system is named: a ledger, kept since 1958, connecting each death to an ancestor's specific act of extraction or violence. Tanner's family roped grizzlies. Cole's ancestor, Greek George himself, is in the ledger. Max's family stuffed and sold eagles. Devin's family burned Serrano people out of the hot spring in 1909 and fenced it. Jules's mother's side is Reese, one of the Chimney Rock posse who fired into an encampment in 1867. And beside the earliest Reese, Jules's ancestry DNA results reveal Maria, no last name recorded, born in the San Bernardino Mountains, listed in Calvin Reese's household three years after Chimney Rock.

A ghost grizzly, still wearing the braided rawhide lasso Tanner's ancestor used in 1845, pursues the survivors from the chalet. Boone Kittredge, a deputy who has known about the ledger for three generations and has been keeping watch on his own family's account, drives a county snowplow into the bear to let the others escape. The bear spares Boone. The survivors race to the Eye of God. The bear takes Tanner. When it's done, the old lasso around its neck finally parts and falls into the snow. The bear walks away.

At the Eye, Jules confesses to Lena: she read the letter, she photographed it, she shredded it. She is going to the county and the DA with the files. Two weeks later, Jules presents Lena's recovered photo to the board of supervisors. The Pine Place permit is revoked. The land goes to tribal trust. The commissioner is indicted. Elwood draws a ruled line under the last ledger entry and closes the book.

One year later, a party bus arrives in Big Bear for another man's thirtieth birthday. The coyote watches him from the roof of a parked car. The account never closes. It only rests.

STORY AND STRUCTURE

The script's structural spine is correctly installed and correctly sequenced. The cold open establishes the ruling ethic of casual extraction; Jules at her desk establishes the moral wound; the road to Big Bear assembles the ensemble and plants the weather clock. The first act turn is Wade's death on pages 24 through 26, the midpoint is Elwood's back room on pages 66 through 72, and the climax is the Eye of God on pages 107 through 110. These are the right beats in roughly the right positions.

The structural problem is causal, not positional. The script is running two stories, Jules's moral reckoning with the letter and the supernatural accountability engine, and it keeps them separated for most of the second act. Deaths happen around Jules without her feeling them as consequences of her specific act. The connection is implied throughout but not dramatized until page 90, when Tanner says "Dad said you handled the file." That arrival is late, and it comes from him rather than from Jules's own active confrontation with what she has enabled.

- The four instances of Jules failing to act (pages 3, 35, 47, 55) are correctly staged as failures, but their stakes do not visibly escalate, so they accumulate without building toward crisis.

- Gil's weather clock (pages 9 through 10) goes quiet for forty-eight pages and reappears only at page 58, by which time the tension it should have been sustaining has dissipated.

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- The Devin death on pages 40 through 42 is handled near-off-screen, which is the right instinct for budget and tone, but the reader's tension has been partially released across twenty pages of social comedy, so it registers less viscerally than it should.

- The third act from page 73 onward, the simultaneous blizzard, pursuit, Boone's sacrifice, and the Eye, is structurally sound and gains power from its momentum.

The resolution on pages 110 through 119 is proportionate and earns its hopefulness. The quartz fitting back into the Eye where Sloane's attempt failed, the Recently Deleted folder, Elwood's ruled line, and the coyote watching Tyler's party bus are all correctly sequenced payoffs. The newspaper insert on page 114 is doing summary work that slightly flattens what has otherwise been a formally confident script; consider whether this information could arrive through a more active means.

FORM-SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT

As a feature, the script's dramatic architecture has a sound foundation with one sustained weakness: the second act does not escalate pressure on the protagonist's specific choice.

A feature-length horror drama with a moral reckoning engine requires that the protagonist feel the mounting deaths as consequences of her specific act, not simply as events happening in her vicinity. Jules is correctly designed as someone whose flaw is deferral, keeping her head down in exchange for security, and that design is dramatized clearly. The problem is that four deferrals across 104 pages, without differentiated stakes or one mid-film choice that costs her something immediate, cannot sustain the causal momentum a feature needs.

- Pages 1 through 26 build at exceptional speed. The double-opening establishes world and protagonist correctly. The first supernatural kill lands at exactly the right moment, roughly page 25, and is thematically exact.

- Pages 26 through 55 are the script's weakest structural stretch. After Wade's death, the script cycles through Oktoberfest, the village tour, and two extended bar scenes before the second kill. This is approximately twenty pages during which the supernatural threat goes quiet and the ensemble is defined primarily by attitude rather than by the specific acts that will make them accountable.

- Pages 55 through 72 recover. The fire's revelation, Gil's storm arriving on schedule, and Elwood's back room scene form a coherent escalating sequence. The ledger reveal on pages 67 through 70, with Cass reading faster and faster, is the film's best-paced piece of exposition.

- Pages 73 through 108 are the most cinematic stretch, the simultaneous Cole, Max, and grizzly sequences built on interlocking escalation. The grizzly losing its lasso on page 108 is the film's central image and it arrives correctly.

- Pages 109 through 119 earn their resolution. Jules's confession is the right climax for her arc. The hearing scene on pages 112 through 113, with the photo recovered from Recently Deleted, pays off the original shredding action with both narrative and thematic precision.

The feature's sustained story engine is the accountability ledger operating in real time across a single weekend. That engine is fully powered. The gap is in connecting Jules's specific contribution to the engine's fuel to the events the engine produces.

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THE FIRST TEN PAGES

The opening ten pages are among the most confident in the script.

Page 1 establishes the film's ruling comedy immediately: Tanner framing the tribal monitor out of his promotional shot, commanding the burro to "go be wild somewhere else," and announcing "We'll fix it in post" over the SMASH TO BLACK and title card. The ukulele that is "relentlessly upbeat" is exactly the right sonic signature for what this film is satirizing. The tone is set in four exchanges.

Pages 3 through 5 introduce Jules at her desk with unusual efficiency. The funeral program, the law school acceptance letter, the Wolcott Fellowship, and the DNA testing kit establish her entire situation without expository dialogue. The letter with "N/A, DO NOT INCLUDE. GW" across the top in black marker, found in the back pocket of the already-approved binder, is the film's inciting act staged with precision. Jules dropping the letter into the shred bin, the script noting "It's gone. You can't get it back out of those. That's the point of them," and then sitting in the dark with her phone glowing with the photo she took, is the entire film's moral architecture stated in one page. Grant's exit, tapping the doorframe "fond," is correctly chilling.

The road sequence on pages 5 through 10 assembles the ensemble without expository drag by putting everyone in motion with a specific want. Cole timing his carsickness. Devin reading about oxygen. The fireworks box labeled clearly. Max recording his podcast opener. The burn scar on pages 6 through 7 is beautiful environmental writing: "growing up between them, shockingly bright: new green." Jules alone looking at the bighorn ram is the film's first glimpse of what she can perceive that others cannot.

Gil's cabin on pages 9 through 10 is the weather clock wound correctly. "And that's a lot of wind first" is the right last line for his introduction.

The first ten pages do not waste a moment.

PACING

The script's pacing has a clear shape: very fast for thirty pages, then soft for twenty, then recovered and excellent through the final fifty.

- Pages 1 through 26 move at exceptional speed. The comedic and dread registers are genuinely intercut, ensemble introduction avoids expository drag, and the first supernatural kill lands with both horror and dark comedy intact.

- Pages 26 through 55 soften. The Oktoberfest brawl (pp. 26 through 30), the village tour and Tibbs shop (pp. 14 through 23), and the extended Holdout visit (pp. 50 through 55) collectively form a long social comedy stretch during which the supernatural threat recedes after Wade's death. These scenes are individually strong; collectively they release the tension that should be building.

- Gil's weather clock disappears between pages 10 and 58. A ticking clock that the audience has been told to trust should tick more audibly across act two, even briefly, to maintain forward pressure.

- The fire's connection to Devin and Bex's fireworks is revealed via a news alert on page 55 rather than traced in real time. This obscures the causal chain across seventeen pages and weakens the second kill's consequence.

- Pages 73 through 108 are the script's most cinematic stretch. The simultaneous Cole at Belleville, Max in the canyon, and Boone's snowplow sacrifice are structurally ambitious and largely land. The intercut momentum here compensates for whatever the second act has lost.

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- Pages 109 through 119 are paced correctly for resolution, though the newspaper insert on page 114 flattens the epilogue slightly.

The core pacing fix is in the stretch from pages 36 to 55: the weather clock needs to be audible at least twice during this stretch, and the fire's causal connection to Bex and Devin should be traceable in real time rather than revealed through a morning news alert.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND ARCS

Jules Navarro is correctly designed as a protagonist whose flaw is deferral, and the script dramatizes each failure of nerve with discipline. The risk is that four deferrals of the same basic choice, unprotected by differentiated immediate stakes, can read as repetition rather than escalation. The diagnosis that Jules is "passive" is an overcorrection: her inaction is the drama. But the four instances of her not acting, pages 3, 35, 47, and 55, need to register as costing her increasingly more with each pass, not just morally but in terms of immediate, visible consequence. Currently they accumulate; they should escalate. Her ancestry reveal on page 91 is handled with real restraint, and "So I'm him. And I'm her" is the film's most compressed moral sentence. The confession at the Eye and the hearing scene on pages 109 through 113 both earn their weight.

Elwood Tibbs is the script's most fully realized character, and every scene he occupies earns its length. The specific details carry the characterization: the scholarship envelopes, the shins on page 22, never going up the hill. His one structural limitation is that he is never wrong and never in danger, which makes him the script's most static major character. This is not a problem to fix but to be aware of: his oracular function should not crowd out the other characters' dramatic choices.

Lena Avila is the script's most carefully protected character and its most underused dramatic resource. The refusal to make her a curse-deliverer on pages 92 through 93 is the script's most important and principled decision, and her speech, "A ghost in a headdress. A burial ground. Something with feathers you can blame and then buy a dreamcatcher from," is the film's best-deployed directness. The limitation is that she has no active, failing attempt of her own during the film's weekend: she arrives at crime scenes, delivers moral corrections, and exits. Her specific stake, the village site and pebble plain she has been monitoring daily for six weeks, is established on page 31 and then largely set aside until pages 92 through 93. She needs one scene in act two where she attempts a specific procedural intervention of her own, files an emergency stop order, contacts the DA directly, makes a call that fails, something that gives her active dramatic function independent of Jules's arc.

Tanner Wolcott is efficiently used as a villain too oblivious to register himself as one. His dinner speech on page 33 and the exchange "Dad said you handled the file" on page 34 are among the script's best scenes. His final moments on pages 107 through 108, "I wasn't even born," against Jules's quiet "Neither did they," achieve the moral clarity the film has been building toward.

Cole Brandt is vivid and correctly deployed, but he disappears from the script for long stretches of act two. His death at Belleville on pages 82 through 83, with Lum Chee's tired, non-vengeful face, is the film's most formally sophisticated kill. Max Ferrante's looting is revealed only at his death as a confessional device; this compresses his arc into one scene, which loses character development. A glimpse of the Pelican case earlier, perhaps on page 7 when he opens the Jeep, would let the audience know without the script labeling it as sinful, and the reveal of its contents on pages 86 through 87 would then feel like confirmation rather than exposition.

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DIALOGUE AND VOICE

The dialogue is the script's most consistent technical strength. Each major character's register is immediately distinguishable and holds under pressure without any character leaking into another's idiom.

Elwood's declarative weight, arriving without preamble or hedging, is the script's most reliable instrument. "The mountain keeps books. Most years, it lets the account ride. Then one year it doesn't" on page 23 would not work if it were two sentences longer or one sentence shorter. The rhythm is correct. His later "So it does" on page 71, as the final three-word conclusion to his explanation of why the mountain acts when people don't, is the same gift.

Lena's dry refusal to perform mysticism is maintained across every scene she occupies. The speech on pages 92 through 93 works because it is a character refusing a role, not an author inserting a thesis. The specific items she names, headdress, burial ground, dreamcatcher, are items the audience has been half-expecting, and her naming them as a category to reject is formally precise. This is on-the-nose writing deployed as character correction of on-the-nose thinking, and the distinction matters.

The Boone-Cass dynamic is handled almost entirely through compression and subtext: "You've been in Elwood's book" on page 101 against "Page one" on page 102 is a full scene accomplished in four words.

The weak spots are in the ensemble comic scenes where characters exchange quips under light pressure. Max's horror-movie-rules speech at Oktoberfest on pages 26 through 27 is a little too knowing, slightly too audible as the writer winking at the structure. It works as characterization; it slightly deflates the dread. The van-ride dialogue on pages 5 through 8 is slightly overpopulated and could lose a beat without losing a character.

The DNA ancestry thread across pages 5, 35, and 91 is handled with real restraint. Jules's line "So I'm him. And I'm her" earns its compression.

TONE AND THEME

The script argues that the account of colonial extraction never closes; it only rests. Deaths occur not through generic supernatural punishment but through a specific system of inherited accountability rooted in named historical acts. The system has genuine internal logic: the kills rhyme with their ancestors' sins, the natural elements of the San Bernardino Mountains function as instruments, and the question of how to discharge an account, by giving something back freely, is dramatized through three distinct examples before it is stated.

The tone is the script's most ambitious achievement and its most difficult to sustain. Satirical, comedic, elegiac, and dread-laden registers are genuinely intercut throughout, with the satirical mode establishing the visitors' obliviousness before the dread mode takes hold. This works through most of the script. The transition is managed through the structure of set piece kills and the escalating weather.

The thematic statement is most forcefully delivered through Lena's speech on pages 92 through 93 and through the ledger readings on pages 67 through 70. Both arrive from character rather than from authorial need to explain, which earns their directness. The thematic counterweight, that accountability can be discharged by giving something back freely, is dramatized through Elwood's scholarship envelopes, Boone's choice at the zoo, and Jules's confession. These three constitute a genuine argument rather than a simple punishment-and-redemption structure. Crucially, Boone's freedom from the ledger after his sacrifice, "Gave it freely. Not taken" on page 117, and Jules's freedom, "Gave it back. Not taken," depend on the distinction between self-protective action and genuine relinquishment. That distinction is the film's

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central moral question and it is dramatized rather than stated.

One register concern: the kills through pages 25, 42, and 61 all use natural landscape elements, plant, water, and mineral, as instruments. These kills are deniable as animal attack or geological event, which is why Boone's family has been writing "rockfall" for three generations, and why Cass writes "lion." The Lum Chee sequence on pages 81 through 83 operates on different rules: Cole has a stab wound and an empty pistol, and Lum Chee leaves bootprints that stop in the middle of an open meadow. This evidence cannot be explained as a lion. The register shift is perceptible and creates an evidentiary problem for the investigation subplot that the script does not resolve.

WRITING ON THE PAGE

The prose is physically precise and confident throughout. Descriptions earn their space by doing two or three things simultaneously. "His boots crush a cushion plant with every step" on page 1 is characterization, environmental detail, and thematic statement in one sentence. The manzanita's bark described as "the color of dried blood" on page 24, the pine pitch running down the tree above the Kettle "like the tree is weeping" on page 39, and the grizzly moving through snow that "doesn't land on it, the flakes swerve around it" on page 99 are all working at the level where description becomes image.

The action lines stay close to the camera without imposing a camera. Scene breaks are used correctly to generate rhythm: the cut to the podcast host's mattress ad playing inside the manzanita on page 25, tinny and cheerful after Wade's death, is the script's best single tonal achievement. The insert formatting is used sparingly and correctly for the letter on page 3, the ledger page on pages 70 through 71, and the DNA results on page 91. The dissolves tracking Gil's thermometer on page 73, 61 degrees to 47 to 33, as the fire burns and the snow arrives, is a formally confident passage.

One formatting note: "BEX MORENO-HALE" on page 8 uses a hyphenated character name. Hyphenated names can create duplicate character entries in Final Draft and similar software if not entered identically every time. Confirm her name is entered as a single formatted character cue throughout, and run a character-name audit before submission. A dedicated screenplay proofreading pass is recommended before this script goes out; ScreenwritingCommunity.net offers this service if needed.

The writing is not overlength. At approximately 119 pages, the script is within acceptable range for the genre and tone.

MARKETABILITY AND GENRE POSITIONING

This script sits at a productive and commercially active intersection. The industry has demonstrated sustained appetite for horror that carries serious thematic stakes and uses genre mechanics to dramatize material that naturalistic drama cannot. The closest tonal reference points are the original "The Wicker Man" in its folk-horror ecosystem logic, and Kelly Reichardt's work in its attention to landscape as moral record, though this script is more commercially pitched than either. The ensemble-of-visitors-punished-by-landscape structure also recalls "Get Out" in its systematic deployment of a punishing moral system, but this script's refusal of a simple victim-villain binary and its elegiac commitment to historical specificity give it considerably more complexity.

The assets a producer identifies immediately: the Big Bear setting is specific, visually rich, and shoot-able relative to its production value; the ensemble structure supports multiple character marketing entry points; the horror mechanics are original and rooted in ecology and history rather than supernatural furniture that requires expensive practical effects; the coyote costs nothing; and the script has a genuinely commercial hook in the ancestral accountability engine that is simultaneously frightening, intellectually defensible, and

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expandable as a franchise premise, the final image of Tyler's party bus is not ambiguous about the system continuing.

The complications: the film kills several sympathetic characters without offering conventional horror catharsis. The protagonist's relative passivity in the second act complicates the pitch as a straight genre film, since genre buyers expect a protagonist who acts under escalating threat. The thematic material around Native American sovereignty and land rights is handled with more specificity and care than most productions manage, but it will generate development conversations about whether the script's principled refusal to center Lena Avila as a protagonist inadvertently marginalizes the Indigenous perspective even as it protects it from the mystic-explainer role. These are conversations worth having before the script goes wide.

The festival and critical audience for this material is real and demonstrated. A production positioned at the intersection of "Midsommar" and "Pig," directed by someone whose work takes landscape seriously, would find a clear path.

WHAT IS WORKING AND WORTH PROTECTING

Strength 1. The opening five pages stage the film's entire moral architecture without expository dialogue.

The cold open and Jules's desk scene arrive in the correct order at the correct speed. The burro defecating on the survey stake, Tanner reframing the tribal monitor out of his shot, and Jules dropping the letter into the shred bin, then sitting in the dark with her phone glowing, establish world, protagonist, antagonist, wound, and instrument of redemption on pages 1 through 5. The script's resolution on page 113, Jules recovering that photo from Recently Deleted and projecting it twelve feet high behind the board of supervisors, would not work if this opening were not this precise.

Strength 2. Elwood Tibbs and his back room scene are the film's intellectual and emotional heart.

Every scene Elwood occupies earns its length, from the manzanita shins on page 22 to the scholarship envelopes on page 95 to "And I never, ever go up that hill." The back room scene on pages 66 through 72, with Cass reading the ledger faster and faster, is the best-paced piece of exposition in the script. What makes it work is that Elwood is not a wise man dispensing lore: he is a bookkeeper with a specific personal debt, a child of complicity who has spent sixty-eight years paying back what his father took. The scene gives the supernatural system moral legitimacy rather than mechanical punishment. Do not touch it.

Strength 3. The kill mechanics are original, ecologically specific, and thematically exact.

The manzanita death on pages 24 through 26 is the gold standard: Wade spitting into the grinding stone mortar directly causes what happens to him in the thicket, and the bark splitting to reveal pink, wet, ridged wood underneath is both horrifying and formally precise. The spring boiling, the quartz detonating, and the grizzly still wearing its 1845 lasso all carry the same logic: the landscape holds the account. The rope finally parting from the grizzly's neck on page 108 is the image that justifies the enterprise.

Strength 4. Lena's speech on pages 92 through 93 refuses the script's own potential sentimentality. (On pages 92 through 93)

"It's not my curse. That's what all of you keep wanting. A ghost in a headdress. A burial ground. Something with feathers you can blame and then buy a dreamcatcher from." This works because it is a character refusing a role that the audience has been half-expecting her to fill, not an author inserting a

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thesis. The specific items she names are items the script has been careful not to deploy. This speech protects the entire film from the category of harm it is critiquing.

Strength 5. The final image is exactly right.

The coyote watching Tyler's party bus from the roof of a parked car on page 119, tilting its head, is the correct ending for a film whose argument is that the account never closes, it only rests. The script refuses both resolution and nihilism simultaneously, which is a hard tonal achievement.

PRIORITY ISSUES

Issue 1. MAJOR: Jules's four failures do not escalate in visible, differentiated stakes, so the Eye confession carries unearned transformation.

This occurs across pages 3, 35, 47, and 55. The design is correct: Jules is a protagonist whose flaw is deferral, and the film dramatizes each failure deliberately. The problem is not that she fails to act but that the four failures feel like the same failure at the same stakes, accumulating without escalating. When she drops the letter into the shred bin on page 3, she is protecting her future. When she deletes the county email on page 35, she is still protecting her future. When she says "nothing" to Lena on page 47, she is still protecting her future. When she sees the fireworks box on page 55 and says nothing to Cass, she is still protecting her future. The cost of each silence should be visibly higher than the last, and the difference should be dramatized as specific loss, not just moral degradation. The confession at the Eye on pages 109 through 110 is the film's climax, and it works emotionally. But a protagonist who has made four versions of the same choice, without one mid-film moment where the choice costs her something immediate and visible, asks the climax to do the work that the second act should have built toward.

Issue 2. MAJOR: Lena Avila has no active, failing attempt of her own during the film's weekend.

Lena is the script's moral center and its most carefully protected character. The refusal to make her a mystic is crucial and correct. The limitation is that she arrives at crime scenes, delivers moral corrections, and exits. She has been monitoring the pebble plain daily for six weeks, as stated on page 31, but those six weeks are summary. During the film's Friday through Sunday, she has no scene where she attempts a specific procedural intervention of her own that fails, calling the county, filing an emergency stop order, contacting the DA, something with a specific stake that the audience can watch her lose. Without that, her active presence in the film is reactive rather than dramatic, and her handing Jules a rake on page 115 feels like the conclusion of a thematic arc rather than the conclusion of a relationship that has been tested under pressure.

Issue 3. MODERATE: The Lum Chee sequence operates on different genre rules than the rest of the film and creates an evidentiary problem the investigation does not resolve.

The earlier kills, manzanita, boiling spring, exploding quartz, eagle, and lion, all use natural elements as instruments and can be explained as animal attack or geological event. That is why three generations of Kittredge deputies have been writing "rockfall" and "lion." Lum Chee on pages 81 through 83 is a physical apparition with a knife who leaves bootprints that stop in the middle of an open meadow. Cole has a stab wound and an empty pistol. This evidence cannot be explained as a lion. If Cass writes "animal" in her report on Cole's death, she is covering up something that is physically not an animal attack, which is a different thing than writing "lion" for a death by supernatural boiling. The register shift is audible and it compromises the investigation subplot's internal consistency.

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Issue 4. MINOR: Max's artifact looting is revealed only at his death, compressing his arc into one confessional scene.

The Pelican case on the floor of Max's Jeep, the folding shovel, the trowel, the ziplock bags on pages 64 through 65 are the revelation. If a glimpse of that case appeared earlier, perhaps when Max opens the Jeep on page 7 or 8, it would read as nothing at that moment and as confirmation rather than revelation when page 64 arrives. Max's death on pages 86 through 87 is then asked to carry his entire character development as a confessional device. The confession itself, "I took things. From Chimney Rock. Today, and before," is well-written, but his arc from true-crime podcaster to revealed artifact thief would carry more weight if the audience had been holding that detail subconsciously for forty pages.

Issue 5. MINOR: The social comedy stretch from pages 36 to 55 releases tension precisely when it should be building.

After Wade's death on pages 24 through 26, the script cycles through Oktoberfest, the village tour, and two extended bar scenes before Devin's death on pages 40 through 42. Gil's weather clock, wound on pages 9 through 10, disappears entirely during this stretch. The fire's causal connection to Bex

THE PRO TIER SCENE-BY-SCENE APPENDIX

Each scene is labeled No Change Needed, Mostly Working - Small Changes, Needs Revision, or Needs Major Work. This appendix focuses on changes, not a second summary of what already works.

Scene 1. Pages 1-2: Pebble Plain promo shoot | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The cold open does exactly what it needs to do. Tanner framing the tribal monitor out of his shot and commanding the burro to "go be wild somewhere else" before announcing "We'll fix it in post" establishes world, antagonist ethic, and tone in two pages. No revision warranted.

Scene 2. Pages 3-5: Jules at her desk, the letter, Grant's visit | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The script's entire moral architecture is staged here without expository dialogue. The funeral program, the fellowship letter, the DNA kit, the shred bin, and Jules sitting in the dark with her phone glowing are all doing simultaneous work. Grant's exit, tapping the doorframe "fond," is correctly chilling. This scene should not be touched.

Scene 3. Pages 5-7: State Route 330 switchbacks, burn scar, Range Rover interior | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

The road sequence assembles the ensemble cleanly and the burn scar writing is strong. One small fix: Max's Pelican case of stolen artifacts is withheld until page 64, but a brief glimpse of it now, when the Jeep is loaded, would plant a detail the audience holds subconsciously and reads as confirmation rather than revelation when his looting is exposed. One line of action describing a hard-shell case under gear in the Jeep's cargo area, unremarked upon, is enough.

Scene 4. Pages 7-8: Jeep Wrangler interior, ensemble introduction | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

Devin, Bex, Sloane, and Max are introduced economically and their registers are distinct. The fireworks box is correctly planted and Mrs. Okafor will confirm its significance later. The dialogue is slightly overpopulated; the oxygen-percentage exchange and Max's podcast opener together are one beat too many before the burn scar interrupts. Consider cutting either Devin's oxygen statistic or Sloane's first phone address to phone, not both, to tighten without losing a character function.

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Scene 5. Pages 9-10: Gil's cabin, weather forecast | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The weather clock is wound exactly right. "And that's a lot of wind first" is the correct final line for this introduction. The Steller's jay is good. No revision warranted.

Scene 6. Pages 10-11: Big Bear Boulevard arrival, dumpster, coyote | NEEDS REVISION

The local woman photographing the trash and walking away without touching it, followed immediately by the coyote watching the cars, is thematically strong but structurally premature. The coyote appears here as a pure environmental detail before it has been established as a watching presence, which is correct, but the script then uses the coyote in increasingly active and legible ways through the rest of the film. This first appearance works. What needs revision is the dumpster scene itself: the local woman's social media post and the note "Nothing on what to do" risk editorializing in a way that the script elsewhere earns through image rather than authorial comment. Cut "Nothing on what to do" and let the image carry the critique. The woman photographing and walking off does that work without the gloss.

Scene 7. Pages 11-13: Moonridge rental chalet arrival, Mrs. Okafor, Chad the bear | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The arrival sequence is paced correctly. Cole decorating the fish bear, Mrs. Okafor's warning about the Line Fire, and Devin's speaker going off at full volume are individually sharp and collectively establish the visitor-local friction that the film will keep returning to. The chainsaw bears wearing accessories is exactly the right visual register for this world.

Scene 8. Pages 12-13: Chalet great room, house rules, Tanner and Jules at the window | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

Max reading the house rules aloud is good. The Tanner-Jules exchange at the window, "I needed somebody here who'd tell me the truth" against "You've never once wanted that," is the correct first statement of their dynamic. One small addition: Jules's moment checking AllTrails and discovering Cole's "eight easy miles" is actually four should land harder as a character beat showing her as the one who reads the fine print even here, then stays silent about it. Currently she "says nothing," which is correct, but a beat of her putting the phone face-down rather than just pocketing it would make the silence more active.

Scene 9. Pages 14-16: Big Bear Village, Pine Knot Avenue, Fardel | NO CHANGE NEEDED

Fardel's song is the film's thesis statement as folk lyric, and that is the right form for it. Marshall's lip lifting off one tooth is good. The referral to Dutch Halloran plants correctly without over-signaling. The final image of Fardel watching them go, no longer smiling, earns its weight.

Scene 10. Pages 16-18: Big Bear Valley Historical Museum | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

The grizzly photograph, the Gold Mountain mine panorama, and the Ferrante Brothers taxidermy photo are all doing correctly planted work. The Cole-as-Greek-George identification is a little too neat in his self-congratulation, though the script earns it later. The one fix here is Marjorie's "Talk to Elwood. Don't buy a map." This line is doing exactly what it should, but it arrives very quickly after the group enters the museum. Let them circulate for one more exchange before Marjorie delivers it, so the referral feels like it costs her something to give rather than arriving as an immediate redirect.

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Scene 11. Pages 18-23: Tibbs' Gold Country Tours | NO CHANGE NEEDED

This scene is already doing the heaviest exposition work in act one and doing it correctly. Elwood's shins, the manzanita warning to Wade, and Gil's post arriving on Elwood's cracked phone are all paid off later. Elwood's shift from laughter to quiet dread when he reads "SATURDAY NIGHT. REAL SNOW." and counts heads one at a time, landing on Wade and staying there a moment too long, is the scene's best moment and earns its length. The birthday parties line breaks the tension correctly. Jules's "What did you mean? Books?" and Elwood's "Long pants, miss" is the right closing beat.

Scene 12. Pages 23-25: Pebble Plain at dusk, Wade staking, manzanita thicket | NO CHANGE NEEDED

Wade spitting tobacco juice into the grinding stone mortar without breaking stride is the film's most economically damning single action. The manzanita death is staged with formal precision: the comedy of a big man losing a fight to a bush, then the bark splitting to reveal pink wet ridged wood underneath, is the correct tonal sequence. The podcast host's mattress ad playing inside the manzanita after Wade goes down is the script's best single tonal achievement. The coyote carrying the orange survey flag out of the thicket is the right closing image for the first supernatural kill. No revision warranted.

Scene 13. Pages 26-27: Oktoberfest, horror rules speech | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

Max's rules speech is characterization and foreshadowing at once, and Bex and Devin's kiss sealing their fate is exactly right. Trim one exchange from the opening setup of the scene; Max naming all three rules slightly over-telegraphs the structure. Let him get to rule three and have Cole cut him off before he finishes it.

Scene 14. Pages 27-30: Oktoberfest brawl, Cass introduced | NO CHANGE NEEDED

Cass's entrance, three sentences ending a fight, is the correct way to introduce a detective who operates through compression. The scene earns its length.

Scene 15. Pages 30-31: Pebble plain, dusk, Wade staking | NEEDS REVISION

Wade spitting into the grinding stone mortar is the causal act that kills him, and it needs to land harder as a moment. Right now it appears in a single sentence between two beats of physical comedy. Give it one additional line of action, not dialogue, that makes the reader register what he has just done before he plunges into the manzanita. The kill depends on this cause being legible.

Scene 16. Pages 24-26: Manzanita kill | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The best-constructed scene in the script. The bark splitting to reveal wet, pink, ridged wood, the podcast host selling a mattress in his dangling earbud, and the coyote carrying away the orange survey flag are all exact. Do not touch it.

Scene 17. Pages 26: Manzanita scene continuation through coyote exit | NO CHANGE NEEDED

See above entry covering pages 24-26; the kill scene spans this boundary and the entry covers it fully.

Scene 18. Pages 33-34: Chalet great room, party and site plan | NEEDS REVISION

Tanner's speech and the site plan reveal are working. The problem is Jules's confrontation over "mitigation TBD." She presses him twice and then accepts his answer. This is the second time she fails to act, and it should cost her something immediately visible, not just morally. At minimum, have Cass's earlier business card fall out of Jules's pocket here, or have Jules pull up Lena's name on her phone and then put it away. Give the audience one small concrete action that shows how close she comes before

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she pulls back. Without it, this failure reads identically to the shred bin on page 5.

Scene 19. Pages 35-36: Deck scene, Jules deletes email and photo | NEEDS REVISION

The sequence is correctly staged and the coyotes' chorus is the right punctuation. The structural problem is that Jules deletes both the draft and the photo in the same beat, which makes the choice feel complete rather than provisional. Separate the two deletions by a scene break or by having her delete the draft, go back inside, and return to delete the photo later. The Recently Deleted folder detail on page 113 works better if the audience has watched her almost go back for it once before she doesn't.

Scene 20. Pages 36-37: Chalet great room, group disperses | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

"Nobody is splitting up. Then everybody splits up" is a good joke on the horror convention and Max's reaction earns it. Cut Sloane's sacral chakra speech by two lines; she has already been characterized and this repeats the note.

Scene 21. Pages 37-38: North Shore Drive, fireworks | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

The scene is efficient and the sparks under the deck land correctly. The comedy of Bex and Devin arriving at the wrong end of the lake is a small gift. Consider having Devin register the No Fireworks sign before tearing the box open rather than after; it sharpens his specific obliviousness without adding words.

Scene 22. Pages 38: Ember under the deck, coyote | NO CHANGE NEEDED

"The ember breathes" is the right last image and the coyote sniffing the air before looking east after the Jeep is exactly the right register, patient and non-judgmental.

Scene 23. Pages 38-42: Kettle Springs, the pool, Devin's death | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

The sequence is correctly built and Devin's death is handled with the right degree of indirection. One small fix: the chain-link being pushed back down flat before Bex reaches it needs one more beat of physical business to sell it as physically impossible rather than merely unlucky. As written it could read as the gap simply being harder to find in the dark. Have Bex touch the fence and find it warm, or have the sign swing back into place, something that tells us the barrier is active rather than simply closed.

Scene 24. Pages 42-44: Bex returns, sheriff's station, Kettle Springs dawn | NO CHANGE NEEDED

Bex's entrance, her inability to speak, and Jules being up first are all correct. Patty at the sheriff's station "stops typing" is exactly the right characterization in two words.

Scene 25. Pages 43: Hank Tuttle's cabin, Cass morning scene | NO CHANGE NEEDED

This is the most economical scene in the script. "Who died." against "Go back to sleep" establishes the relationship, its history, and Cass's character in four lines. The lumberjacks joke earns its laugh and the "Love you too" to the ceiling is correctly placed.

Scene 26. Pages 44-47: Kettle Springs dawn investigation, Lena arrives | NEEDS REVISION

Lena's arrival and speech about the spring are the strongest moment she has been given to this point, and her exchange with Cass about writing "animal" is the script's most direct statement of institutional complicity. The problem is what happens next: Jules opens her mouth as Lena passes, says "nothing," and Lena says "everybody's sorry" and leaves. This is Jules's third failure of nerve and it carries the same stakes as the first two. Give Lena one line here that lands differently because she is looking at Jules

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specifically, something in her face or posture that tells us she already knows more than Jules thinks. The failure of Jules's near-confession then has an observer, which will make the Eye confession on page 109 feel like completing something Lena has been waiting for.

Scene 27. Pages 48-50: State Route 330 roadblock, Delamar Mountain, Max and the eagle | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

The rockslide on the road out is a good containment beat. The eagle sequence is correctly staged and the description, yellowed white head, ragged feathers, glass eyes, bigger than any eagle should be, earns its single paragraph. The GoPro hanging from the talons before the eagle drops it is a precise image. One adjustment: Max sliding the feather inside his jacket while whispering "Five grand. At least" is excellent, but it arrives before the audience knows his artifact looting history. Consider planting the Pelican case in this scene, opened briefly on a stump beside the drone case, so this moment reads as confirming something rather than introducing it. The main report has flagged this as a priority fix for his arc.

Scene 28. Pages 51, 52: Max interviews Dutch Halloran at The Holdout bar | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

The scene pays off Fardel's cryptic referral and delivers Dutch's reveal efficiently. One small fix: when Max's hand moves involuntarily to the feather inside his jacket after Dutch says "give it back," the gesture should be written as an action line separate from the dialogue, not embedded in the paragraph describing Dutch lowering his glasses. As formatted, the reader may miss it on a first pass. Give it its own line so its weight registers.

Scene 29. Pages 53, 54: The Holdout bar, day, Elwood's "same grin" and Tanner's departure announcement | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

Elwood's quiet "Same grin" to Dot, comparing Cole to Greek George, is the scene's best moment and needs no change. The Walt and Ruthie exchange about loving the forest but not going into it in fifteen years lands correctly. One trim: Tanner's exit announcement and the Elwood-Ruthie-Walt rhythm run a beat long. Cut from "Before the blizzard?" through the shared laughter back to Gil and Elwood not laughing. That single compression keeps the scene from repeating what it has already established about locals' silence.

Scene 30. Pages 55, 56: INT. Chalet, great room, day, Bex reads the fire alert, Jules sees the fireworks box | NEEDS REVISION

This is the scene where Jules has her clearest mid-film opportunity to act and does not, and it should cost her something immediate. Currently Jules sees the box, Bex sees Jules see it, and neither speaks. That silence is correct. What is missing is any visible immediate consequence of that silence within the same scene: Cass is not in the room, so no one with authority passes through, and the scene ends without Jules feeling the choice land on her body. Add a beat in which Jules moves toward the door or picks up her phone, something that shows the choice as a physical moment she aborts, before Tanner speaks. The silence should feel active, not passive.

Scene 31. Pages 57, 58: EXT. North Shore Drive fire, Cass reads the burn scene and finds the Roman Candle tube | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The scene accomplishes its causal work cleanly and Cass's hotshot backstory is introduced without expository drag.

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Scene 32. Page 58: EXT. Gil Hartsock's cabin, Fawnskin, evacuation | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The weather clock returns exactly when it should, and "The wind's not the storm, son. The wind's running ahead of it" is the scene's correct last note before the blizzard arrives.

Scene 33. Pages 59, 61: EXT. Forest Road 2N02 and The Eye of God, Sloane's livestream and the quartz detonation | NEEDS REVISION

The sequence is visually strong and the detonation is staged well. The revision needed is in Sloane's on-camera monologue. Her description of the Eye as "a sacred site for the, um, Indigenous people here" followed immediately by the pivot to her checkout code is correctly damning, but the monologue runs about six lines too long before the hammer comes out. The viewer count climbing to 40,000 while she speaks already does the satirical work. Trim the monologue by three to four lines between "So I came here to hold mine" and "And I want to share this energy with you," tightening the irony without explaining it twice.

Scene 34. Page 61: EXT. Eye of God, wide shot after the detonation, the coyote returns the quartz chip | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The coyote carrying the chip back and dropping it at the foot of the dome is the sequence's correct final image, and the script is right to end on the gray wall of cloud rising over the desert rather than holding on the rubble.

Scene 35. Pages 61, 63: INT. Big Bear Sheriff's Station, Cass's office, Lena maps the deaths onto the creation story | NEEDS REVISION

Lena's speech connecting the three sites to the Yuhaaviatam creation narrative is the scene's essential content and is correctly handled. The problem is structural: Lena enters, delivers the map reading, is told "I can't write that," exits, and Boone then delivers the generational-cover-up information. Lena leaves the scene before Boone's revelation, which means she never hears that three generations of Kittredge deputies have been suppressing exactly the evidence she has been generating. That is information she should hear, and her reaction to it, even one line, would give her scene-level active stake rather than the oracular-correction-and-exit function she currently occupies. Hold her in the room through Boone's speech and give her one response.

Scene 36. Pages 63, 64: EXT. State Route 18, Chimney Rock, Max films his two-plaque stand-up | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The two-plaque reading is efficiently done and the pivot from his on-camera ethical clarity to opening the Pelican case is the scene's correct turn. As noted in the main report, an earlier glimpse of that case would strengthen this moment, but the scene itself needs no internal change.

Scene 37. Page 64: EXT. Chimney Rock base, Max digs and labels artifacts | NEEDS REVISION

This scene reveals Max's systematic looting for the first time. The scene works as revelation but lands with less force than it should because nothing in the script before this page has made the Pelican case visible as anything other than production equipment. Write one additional action line in which Max opens the case and we see it already contains labeled bags before he adds the new ones. The word "others" is used in the existing line "He puts them in the Pelican case beside others" and does the work, but a reader moving quickly may not register it. Make the prior contents explicit: "a dozen more bags, each labeled in Sharpie," so the revelation reads as confirmation of a pattern rather than a first disclosure.

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Scene 38. Page 65: INT. Chalet, great room, dusk, Tanner's phone call and the missing Rover keys | NO CHANGE NEEDED

Tanner's call to his father, "Nobody's going to look at the permit because a guy died in a hot tub," is a clean character beat and Jules's decision to call Cass and ask to meet Elwood is the correct act-two turn.

Scene 39. Pages 66, 72: INT. Tibbs' Gold Country Tours, back room, Elwood's ledger | NO CHANGE NEEDED

This is the film's best scene. The ledger reveal, with Cass reading faster and faster and Jules hearing the name Reese among the Chimney Rock posse, is paced exactly right. The insert of the Greek George ledger page, "Left a boy. Account still open," is correctly placed as the scene's hinge. Elwood's "That's why I keep it" and his explanation of sixty-eight years of paying back through tours, warnings, and anonymous scholarship envelopes are the film's moral counterweight to Tanner's napkin gesture later. Do not revise this scene.

Scene 40. Pages 73, 74: EXT. Big Bear Dam overlook, Gil watches the snow extinguish the fire via three dissolves | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The dissolve structure tracking the thermometer from 61 to 47 to 33 degrees as the fire burns and the snow arrives is the script's most formally confident passage. Gil deleting his own post and saying "I knew. And it knew" is the correct final note: the weather forecaster as witness rather than explainer.

Scene 41. Page 74: EXT. Moonridge, night, Mrs. Okafor and the lit chalet | NO CHANGE NEEDED

One-scene punctuation beat, correctly brief.

Scene 42. Page 75: INT. The Holdout, night, Cole's last scene at the bar before Belleville | NEEDS REVISION

Cole's harassment of Tessa is correctly staged and Dot's exit with the Louisville Slugger is the right ending. The revision needed is in Cole's discovery of the pistol in the glove box. Currently he pops the glove box for a phone charger, finds the gun, weighs it, grins, and tucks it into his jacket. The script does not explain why Tanner's father's pistol is in Tanner's glove box, and because Cole's death by that pistol failing to fire at Lum Chee is the scene's climactic irony, the gun's provenance matters. Add one line, either action or Cole's muttered recognition, that makes clear this is a Wolcott family weapon. The irony that a Wolcott gun is useless against the account Wolcotts opened is the scene's point, and it will not register without that detail placed here.

Scene 43. Pages 76-77: Cole finds the gun / Jeep slides into the canyon | NEEDS REVISION

Cole pocketing Tanner's father's pistol is doing the work of arming the ancestor's descendant for the Belleville confrontation, and it lands. The problem is that two separate scenes, Cole at the bar and Max sliding off the road, both begin on page 76 and neither transitions from the other causally. Cole's drunk discovery of the gun needs one beat that makes the pistol feel specifically weighted, not just convenient. Consider having Cole clock the Greek George T-shirt in the glove box mirror as he tucks the gun away; it costs nothing and makes his identity merger explicit before Belleville.

Scene 44. Pages 77-78: Cole hits the burro foal | NEEDS REVISION

The foal sequence is thematically exact, Greek George's descendant harming a wild animal and shoving it out of sight rather than stopping, and the coyote watching from the woodpile closes it correctly. The scene's one structural problem is pacing: Cole's internal monologue of "okay okay okay" and the physical

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business of dragging the foal runs slightly longer than the moment warrants. Cut one beat of his rationalizing dialogue and move directly to him wiping his hands. The jenny braying should be the scene's last sound before cut, not the taillights disappearing.

Scene 45. Pages 79-80: Fardel's tent burns | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

Fardel's tent fire and his "I'm square, right? We're square" to the sky earns its place as counterweight to the accountability deaths, a man whose debt is settled by loss rather than predation. Marshall saving him is correctly understated. Remove "almost laughing" from the stage direction on page 79; Fardel's comedy is funnier and more dignified when the reader supplies it without the script signaling it.

Scene 46. Pages 80-83: Max in Horse Thief Canyon / Cole at Belleville | NO CHANGE NEEDED

Both sequences are delivering at the register the film has built toward. Max's lion paw prints appearing beside his inbound footprints is the right image for a man who has been walking alongside predatory extraction without noticing it. The Lum Chee confrontation is the film's most formally ambitious kill: Lum Chee's tiredness rather than vengeance, the bullets passing through him, the three dead men watching without speaking. Cole's last grin crossing his face as a reflex, and the footprints stopping ten steps into the open meadow, are both correctly placed images. Do not revise.

Scene 47. Pages 83-85: Rooster finds Cole / Fardel sees Lum Chee | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

Rooster scooping up the foal on his own jacket and announcing "The dog's a hero, the dog's riding shotgun" is the film's most earned comic beat in the third act. Fardel seeing Lum Chee through the windshield and removing his hat is correct in impulse. One small fix: Lum Chee "nods" before disappearing. Given that he has just killed a man and his defining quality is tiredness rather than resolution, replace the nod with his simply turning away and being gone. A nod reads as acknowledgment-of-debt-cleared; turning away reads as a man who has been doing this for a long time and has no ceremony left for it.

Scene 48. Pages 85-87: Max's final phone call / the bighorn ram | NO CHANGE NEEDED

This is the scene where Max, for the first time in the film, lowers his phone and does not record. That inversion earns everything that follows: his confession arriving in the same breath as the boulder shifts above him, the call dropping mid-sentence so that his unfinished location of the artifacts echoes Frenchy Ferrante's "it's in the," and Elwood completing the rhyme quietly from the back seat. The bighorn ram visible only to Max, only in this moment, is correctly placed and correctly withheld from Cass and Jules. Do not revise.

Scene 49. Pages 88-90: Rooster at Belleville / Chalet great room / Tanner confesses | NEEDS REVISION

Rooster's "Watch me" and the foal lifting its head in the back seat close the Belleville sequence correctly. The chalet scene on pages 89 through 90 is the film's most necessary expository scene and it delivers: Tanner's admission that he told Wade to stake the pebble plain before Lena could stop them is the moment Jules's suppression of the letter and Tanner's active instruction to continue become causally linked in the same scene. The problem is that Jules closes her eyes and the script delivers her thought as action line, "A woman with a clipboard. A letter in a shred bin. Two ways of making somebody disappear," without letting that realization produce any visible change in Jules's behavior in the scene. She says nothing. The action line is doing the work Jules should do. Cut the action line, and give Jules one line or one physical action in this scene that shows the connection has landed, even if she still does not speak the truth aloud yet.

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Scene 50. Pages 91-95: Jules reads her DNA results / Lena arrives / Tanner's napkin | NEEDS REVISION

Jules opening the ancestry results on page 91, the scrolling through Navarro, Reese, Reese, Reese, and arriving at Maria, is handled with real restraint and "So I'm him. And I'm her" is the film's most compressed moral sentence. Elwood's response, "The book's open on you, and the book owes you. Never seen that before," is correctly ambiguous. Lena's entrance and her refusal to perform the mystic role on pages 92 through 93 is the film's most important principled decision and should not be touched. The problem is Tanner's napkin confession on pages 97 through 98. His writing "I hereby give the land to the tribe" on a "LAKE LIFE" cocktail napkin and holding it up to the window shouting "IT'S YOURS" is correctly staged as insufficient, and Jules's "You're doing it because you're scared" against Lena's "That's not freely, Tanner" closes it correctly. But the scene needs Lena to have one moment of genuine want before she refuses his offering. As written, she is entirely diagnostic. Give her a beat, even a half-beat, where the napkin almost matters to her before she names why it cannot.

Scene 51. Pages 95-97: Elwood reveals his own debt / Bex confesses the fire | NO CHANGE NEEDED

Elwood's admission that he is on page one of the ledger and has spent sixty-eight years paying back what his father took, the scholarship envelopes, never going up the hill, and Lena's surprised "That's you? The envelopes?" followed by his "Don't tell anybody. I'm Crazy Elwood. It's my brand," is the scene's best exchange and cannot be improved without damaging it. Bex's feverish clarity about the fireworks, naming Jules as complicit by look rather than by accusation, is correctly staged and correctly limited to a single exchange before the slider opens.

Scene 52. Pages 96-100: Bex taken / Tanner and the grizzly approaching | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The lion taking Bex through the frosted sliding glass door, visible only as shapes and spreading darkness, is the film's best-executed kill because it refuses the reveal. The screen direction, "The long shape flows over her," followed by Jules hauls the door open to find only a depression in the snow and saucer-sized paw prints already filling, is exactly the right choice. The grizzly's arrival on pages 98 through 99, stepping over the fallen trunk, the snow not landing on it, the old rawhide lasso cutting deep into its fur, is the correct image at the correct moment. Chad the carved bear exploding into splinters when the grizzly swats it is both funny and correct. Do not revise.

Scene 53. Pages 101-102: Radio exchange, Boone's decision | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The compressed Boone-Cass exchange and the snowplow cab scene earn every word. "Page one" does the work of a full confession in two words, and Boone's Dodgers radio and rosary are exactly the right characterization before his sacrifice.

Scene 54. Pages 102-104: Moonridge chase, golf course intercept | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

The grizzly cutting the corner across the golf course is the sequence's best visual invention and reads cinematically. One small fix: when the bear hits the truck at the lower switchback, the claw raking through the back window needs one more beat clarifying who is seated where, since the manuscript has reshuffled passengers without tracking it, to ensure the near-miss on Tanner registers as targeting him specifically rather than anyone.

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Scene 55. Pages 104-106: Big Bear Alpine Zoo, plow impact, Boone spared | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

The zoo animals going silent in unison while the captive grizzlies watch is one of the film's best images and should not be touched. The small fix: Cass's decision to stop the truck and run back toward the bear needs one line of physical motivation. Her stopping reads slightly arbitrary given that she has no way of knowing Boone is alive; a glimpse of the cab light or radio still glowing would justify the impulse without slowing the sequence.

Scene 56. Pages 106-108: Forest road, the Eye, Tanner's death | NEEDS REVISION

The truck getting stuck and the final run through the snow work. The problem is Tanner's last speech. His attempted bargaining, land, money, a bear sanctuary with a plaque, is correctly oblivious, and Jules's quiet "Neither did they" is the film's best line. But the exchange between his offer and his death takes three full pages of near-static dialogue while a supernatural grizzly waits at the edge of the quartz field. The grizzly waiting passively while Tanner speaks is at mild odds with the creature's established momentum. Compress Tanner's bargaining by roughly half, cutting the sanctuary and plaque line and moving directly from "I don't want to die" to Jules's response and the kill. The sequence will gain rather than lose force.

Scene 57. Pages 108-110: Rope parts, Jules's confession at the Eye | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

The lasso finally parting from the grizzly's neck is the film's central image and lands correctly. Jules's confession is the right climactic action and the specific details, the shred bin, the photo she took first, the email she deleted, Lena's name on the pocket, are well-chosen. One small tightening: the confession currently repeats the information the audience already holds from pages 3 through 5 and pages 35 and 47. The repetition is partly intentional since Jules is saying it aloud for the first time, but the section beginning "I took a picture of it first. Like that made it okay" through "twice I kept my head down" could lose one full paragraph without losing the moral weight. The quartz fitting back into the Eye where Sloane's attempt failed is a formally precise payoff; do not touch it.

Scene 58. Pages 110-111: Cass arrives at dawn, the Eye of God scene | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The three women passing the thermos, the pitch on the trees hardening in the cold, and the bighorn ram visible only to Jules are all correctly handled. Lena's "Nobody has. That's the point of them" followed by Jules's quiet "I have" is the right note for her arc's quiet resolution without overstating it.

Scene 59. Page 112: FADE TO WHITE, Horse Thief Canyon recovery | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

The fade to white into the sunlit canyon epilogue is a sound transition. The lion cache detail, buried him neat as a grave, is correctly understated. One adjustment: the feather still in Max's closed fist is a strong image but the Warden's line "Buried him like he was something worth keeping" tips the register toward sentiment. Cut that line and let the image speak. Rooster looking at the feather in silence is sufficient.

Scene 60. Pages 112-113: County hearing, photo recovered from Recently Deleted | NO CHANGE NEEDED

This sequence pays off the film's inciting act with both narrative and thematic precision. Jules tapping RECOVER and the photo appearing twelve feet high behind the supervisors, with Lena looking at her own signature on the wall, is exactly what the opening five pages earned. The supervisor's line and Jules's answer, "I shredded it" - are the correct compression of her whole arc into two words.

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Scene 61. Page 113: Jules's car, the Pelican case and Max's box | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

The cardboard box labeled "SEASON FINALE - DO NOT OPEN" is the right dark joke for Max's character. The Loyola envelope with "Fellowship rescinded probably somewhere inside it" is correctly observed. Jules's soft "Hidden in the -" closes the Frenchy Ferrante thread neatly. One cut: the description of the box's contents, the ziplock bags with dates and places, restates what the audience already knows from pages 64 and 87. Remove the contents description and let the box remain a closed object that Jules will carry to Lena, which is more consistent with the film's restraint.

Scene 62. Pages 113-115: Lake ceremony, newspaper insert, pebble plain restoration | NEEDS REVISION

The lake ceremony is correctly positioned and the tribal songs heard only at the edges is a sound instinct. The newspaper insert on page 114 is doing summary work that flattens the epilogue. The four headlines compress the investigation's resolution, the permit revocation, the indictment, Gil's vindication, and the fire's cause into a single prop, which is efficient but reduces what should be felt to what is merely reported. Consider replacing the insert with one or two brief scenes, perhaps Cass at her desk with a report, or Rooster in a new context, that dramatize at least one of these outcomes rather than listing them. The pebble plain restoration sequence that follows, with the little girl and the magnifying glass and the two bald eagles turning circles overhead, is the film's most purely hopeful passage and earns its place.

Scene 63. Pages 115-116: Boone's memorial at the Holdout | NO CHANGE NEEDED

Rooster's eulogy is pitch-perfect, particularly "He was saving it." Dutch receiving the feather and the exchange about putting it back closes the eagle thread correctly. The Cass-and-Hank-in-public beat with the old-timers and their drinks is light but earns its moment after the sustained grimness. The framed photo of Boone mid-bite with the sunflower seeds in front of it is the right image for his memorial.

Scene 64. Pages 116-117: Fardel's yard, the burro foal with a cast | NO CHANGE NEEDED

Fardel clean-shaven in new clothes with the tent still in its box beside him, Marshall watching the foal like a nanny while the jenny lets him, is the film's quietest and most earned moment of restoration. "Never was the forest I was scared of" is the correct last line for his arc.

Scene 65. Pages 117-118: Elwood closes the ledger | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The final ledger entries, particularly "Boone Kittredge. Gave it freely. Not taken" and "Julia Navarro. Reese - and Maria. Gave it back. Not taken" - draw the distinction the entire film has been building toward. Elwood drawing a ruled line under the last entry and turning off the lamp is the right formal gesture for a bookkeeper closing an account. This scene should not be touched.

Scene 66. Pages 118-119: Eye of God coda, Jules looks up at the ridge | MOSTLY WORKING - SMALL CHANGES

The three women in the sun passing the thermos, the Eye healed, Jules looking up at the ridge where the ram has been and gone, is the right quiet image before the final scene. One small redundancy: the script's parenthetical describing the three women as "the final girl, the detective who kept her love life to herself until she didn't, and the one who refused to be anybody's mystic" is the writer labeling what the film has shown. Cut this parenthetical. The three women sitting together in the sun without category labels is more powerful than the same image with the categories supplied.

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Scene 67. Page 119: Tyler's party bus, coyote on the car roof | NO CHANGE NEEDED

The T-shirt reading "GRIZZLY BILL - BEAR VALLEY'S DEADLIEST SHOT - 1859" is the correct final dark joke, and Tyler's "We're gonna KILL it this weekend" followed by Fardel playing quietly and the coyote watching from the car roof, tilting its head, is the exact ending this film requires. The cycle is complete and unbroken. The account rests. SMASH TO BLACK is the right punctuation.

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