

CUMBERLAND GAP

by

ARTO ELIOT



Briefly.... a road movie.

Two American sisters go mad and run away.

The story focuses upon the plight of the husbands of wayward women, and from the perspective of one particular husband, Michael, who in pursuit of his lost wife, Susan, discovers an unseen America, reflecting upon his native Britain's National Health Service.

The sisters are both married; one lives in Maryland, the other, married to the Englishman, lives in London. The sisters are separated by their respective marriages, and by the Atlantic Ocean. There are inevitable differences of lifestyle and personality.

A tragic event, the death of their father, marks the beginning of events leading to simultaneous breakdowns of the sisters. A "surprising" event, but not at all coincidental. The sisters are quite different, but nevertheless they are bonded by natural and mutual sympathy.

This "true" story is set against the institutional "carers" in the "American Health System" as well as the morally obliged "carers": the husbands, the brothers and sisters. The judiciary also intervenes.

The sisters are committed to two different institutions, one "state" hospital, and one private. The differences are profound. On the face of it, the "private" hospital has amenity upon amenity; polished marbled floors, and Starbucks and you might say that here, patients have become "clients". The "unfortunate" sister who has no insurance is sent to a State Hospital. Think Dracula's gothic dungeon, compared to a shopping mall.

Who was better off?

The story was not contrived as a far-fetched indictment of the "Privatisation of The British National Health System." though it may serve that purpose. President Clinton failed to reform health care in the US and the status quo was protected under Bush. Obama is now having a go at reforming the flawed American system, but there are powerful lobbies out there, financed by the mighty drug companies. The American public are misinformed and fear a socialist plot. Americans have learnt to think that it is un-American to take care of Americans. Watch Fox TV for a continuous barrage of bigotry on the subject.

My wife has fully recovered, thank you.

It is of course a modern love story, not a "feel good" movie, but a light, good-humoured touch is intended.

ARTO ELIOT

CHARACTERS (SPEAKING)

LONNIE DONEGAN

As himself or a similar
actor or musician playing him.

MICHAEL HARRISON		mid-thirties
SUSAN HARRISON		mid-thirties
PATTY HENLY	Susan's Sister	mid-thirties
WILLIAM HENLY		
	Patty's Son	five years
ROBERT HENLY	Patty's Husband	mid-thirties
CLYDE	Susan and Patty's Brother	early-forties
JAN	Clyde's Wife	late-thirties
AMERICAN WAITRESS		mid-forties
CAROLINE,	Elder Sister of Susan	mid-forties
BIRT MATHEWS		
	Caroline's Husband	early-fifties
BRITISH WAITRESS, JUNE		
	(a friend)	late-twenties
JUDGE		sixties
POLICEMAN		forties
RECEPTIONIST		twenties
JUNIOR DOCTOR		mid-twenties
SENIOR DOCTOR MITCHELL		forties
SEPTEMBER		early-thirties
Patients		
JIMMY		early-thirties
FLIRTATIOUS LADY		early-thirties
HOWIE		late-forties

EXTRAS

BOY		eight years
DECEASED FATHER		seventies
SALLY,	Patty's friend	early-thirties
BECKY,	Patty's friend	mid-thirties
POLLY,	Patty's friend	late-thirties
MR HENLY	Robert's Father	sixties
MRS HENLY	Robert's Mother	sixties
TWO GANGSTERS		
Also extras as PATIENTS, DOCTORS, SOCIAL WORKERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AIRLINE PASSENGERS and BAR and RESTAURANT PATRONS		

LOCATIONS - USA

THE ROCKY GAP, ROUTE 40, CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND, USA
MAC DONALD'S RESTAURANT, (near the Gap) EXT.
ROBERT AND PATTY'S HOUSE, CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND.
KITCHEN, LOUNGE, BEDROOM, CHILD'S BEDROOM
WORKSHOP/GARAGE, PORCH, INT./EXT.

Various Motels, Restaurants and Bars shall be
selected from the Maryland area for the following:

CLYDE'S RESTAURANT INT./EXT.
CLYDE'S BAR INT.
WESTON MOTEL ROOM INT.
MOTEL WITH POOL EXT.
CHEAP BAR INT.
CHEAP MOTEL WITHOUT POOL INT./EXT.
FAST FOOD RESTAURANT EXT.

WESTON STATE HOSPITAL, WESTON, MARYLAND
RECEPTION, OFFICE, DILAPIDATED CORRIDORS,
CELL BLOCK, GROUNDS INT./EXT.
WESTON DOWNTOWN AREA EXT.
WESTON SHOPPING MALL, MARYLAND EXT.

BAY BRIDGE, MARYLAND EXT.
PRIVATE HOSPITAL RESTAURANT INT.
DULLES AIRPORT INT.

LOCATIONS - LONDON

MICHAEL AND SUSAN'S HOUSE, EALING, LONDON
KITCHEN, BEDROOM INT.
EALING HIGH STREET, LONDON EXT.
PIZZA EXPRESS, EALING. INT.
HEATHROW AIRPORT, LONDON EXT.

STUDIO SET-UPS
FUNERAL HOME INT.
BOEING 747

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1/EXT.. ROUTE 40, CUMBERLAND MARYLAND, USA JULY 1988. DAY. ROVING AIR VIEW.

A rented car drives through the Western Maryland mountains.

Wide panoramic views of the midsummer Blue Ridge Mountains.

Helicopter view follows the approach of the highway, toward "Rocky Gap". The Gap is eventually discovered as a tiny chink on the horizon.

The muffled sound of LONNIE DONEGAN singing, "Cumberland Gap, Cumberland Gap, 15 miles to the Cumberland Gap, etc."

2/EXT.. ROUTE 40, ROCKY GAP, CUMBERLAND, DAY.

Close-up of unshaven and worried MICHAEL, driving. Simultaneously, LONNIE DONEGAN's voice becomes unmuffled.

3/EXT.. ROUTE 40, ROM GAP. CUMBERLAND, DAY.

LONNIE DONEGAN fades and the car passes through the Gap. The only sound is that of car tyres . No other traffic.

4/INT.. MAC DONALD'S RESTAURANT, ROUTE 40. DAY.

Close-up of MICHAEL at the counter, ordering his lunch.

5/EXT.. MAC DONALD'S RESTAURANT, ROUTE 40. DAY.

Close-up of MICHAEL sitting at a table unwrapping his food. He takes out a spiral notebook and pencil, takes a bite from his sandwich and starts writing.

MICHAEL

(Voice-over, as if writing)

Susan ... Says,..."Daddy ... is ... not ... Dead. He ... is ... rich ...

As he writes the view widens, revealing a general view of the restaurant including the familiar yellow arches. Voice-over of MICHAEL recalling events leading to his Big Mac.

Michael ... is ... attached ... to ..the .. Pentagon I ... have ... been... to ... the ... mountain... and ... Mom.... has..... told me..... that.... Michael and Robert ... are ... responsible for... her ... death.... Clyde ...killed ... Abraham ... Lincoln, ...and ... the ... Kennedys.

View continues to widen by crane revealing the beautiful blue/green mountain landscape, then closing upon the Gap on the Horizon.

MICHAEL

(Voice-over; normal conversational voice)

"I have been to the mountain?" My American wife, Susan, is hard to understand. For fifteen years I've enjoyed not understanding her. We were OK.....

6/INT.. MICHAEL AND SUSAN'S HOUSE, EALING, LONDON:
KITCHEN. DAY.

SUSAN is cleaning brushes in the kitchen sink; her back to the camera. The

camera pans around the kitchen; we notice an unopened telephone bill.

CAPTION: "TWO WEEKS EARLIER"



MICHAEL *(Voice-over continues)*

..... in our own precious suburban bohemia. We had such a life,.. no kids, but that's another story.

Michael picks up the Phone Bill

MICHAEL *(Voice-over continues)*

I weigh-up the consequences of starting the Telecom Bill debacle. Susan is tough.

The camera finally settles on the telephone, which then rings. Michael looks at the phone as if it were vermin.

MICHAEL *(Voice-over continues)*

Susan never answers the phone. Well.... she may answer the phone if I am not around but..... I have no way of confirming this.

The telephone continues to ring.

MICHAEL *(Voice-over continues)*

All I know, is that if I am around, she will not answer the phone. To her the phone is a noise that signals that she is wanted, and not that she is available.

The telephone continues to ring.

MICHAEL *(Voice-over continues)*

Or it may be that she wants me to be the filter between herself and the outside world. Her personnel answer phone, her telephone receptionist...

The telephone continues to ring.

MICHAEL *(Voice-over continues)*

I know its Patty on the line and so does Susan, so why can't she pick up the phone and speak to her sister.

The telephone continues to ring.

MICHAEL (*Voice-over continues*)

... Susan, being American, and therefore separated by me,.... from her sister, Patty, is a frequent telephone user..... .Very frequent.

The telephone continues to ring.

MICHAEL (*Voice-over continues*)

Our little domestic ritual.....

The camera is panning the room. We discover a huge expressionist style painting; so big that it is wedged into the ceiling. The painting features four UN-naturalistic nudes of mixed genders, and a fiery beast.

The telephone continues to ring. MICHAEL clean shaven, picks up the telephone.



MICHAEL
Hello Patty.

PATTY (unseen)
Hello Michael, are you home?

MICHAEL
At home, oh yes at home right enough. You'll be wanting your big sister.

PATTY (unseen)
Is she there?

MICHAEL
(*as if it were his usual response*)
Yes, She's here. ..**Susan!** Hold on Patty.

MICHAEL casually clunks the telephone down on the table. SUSAN approaches the telephone. She is wearing an oversize day-glow "T" shirt, and bright red lipstick. she has a daub of red paint on the end of her nose and is wiping her hands with a cloth as she walks over to the phone, and picks it up. MICHAEL glances at his watch.

MICHAEL (*Voice-over*)
The girls talked, I counted units even though I was not paying for the call.

SUSAN (*picks up the phone*)
You've gotta come over and see this painting. I'm going to enter it into the Royal Academy Summer Show; if it doesn't get in, I'm hanging up my paintbrushes, n'est pas.

SPLIT SCREEN. SCENES 6 + 7 SHOWN SIMULTANEOUSLY.
7/INT.. PATTY AND ROBERT'S HOUSE, CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND. KITCHEN.
DAY

Immaculate American country style kitchen; very tidy. Conversation introduces her sister, PATTY, who is shown by split screen. Conversation implies that SUSAN is the dominant personality. PATTY being the small town school teacher, impressionable and wanting.
(Split screen is intended to parody, a 1950's style, light romantic comedy)

PATTY
You think you will ...

SUSAN (interrupting)
Michael thinks it's brilliant, but what does he know? Is William there?.. Put him on.

MICHAEL looks up at the mention of his name and notices the red spot on her nose.

PATTY
William!
Do you think you can get over this summer?

SUSAN
Try and stop me. Where's William?

8/I NT.. PATTY AND ROBERT'S HOUSE, CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND: BEDROOM.
DAY
PATTY's son WILLIAM interjects on a third telephone, and is shown in a balloon on the USA side of the Split Screen.

WILLIAM
Hi! Aunt Susan

SUSAN
How was school today?

WILLIAM
Awesome! (or substitute current kid's platitude,)

SUSAN
(Fake Jewish Accent)
Don't give me "awesome", already. I want you to do your homework, and don't even think about arguing with your Aunt Susan.

WILLIAM
I'm not.

SUSAN
You're not even thinking about arguing with your Aunt Susan?

WILLIAM

No

SUSAN

No, You're not even thinking about arguing with your Aunt Susan?

Or, No, You're not thinking? Or, No, You're not arguing?

WILLIAM

Whatever.

SUSAN

Whh... I hate that word.

PATTY

O. K. young man, back to.. -

SUSAN

Yes you're dismissed young man

MICHAEL creeps up on SUSAN and starts to tease her as she speaks, feigning kisses She pushes him away but he persists. At the appropriate moment he offers her a small hand held mirror and gives SUSAN a view of her paint embellished nose.

SUSAN

AAAH! Sorry Pat, gotta go. Love to Robert.

SUSAN hangs up. PATTY looks disappointed.

9/INT.. EALING: BEDROOM. NIGHT.

MICHAEL and SUSAN are in bed. SUSAN is awake but in a sleeping posture.

MICHAEL is reading. The telephone rings and MICHAEL picks up the phone.

MICHAEL

Hi Patty..

ROBERT (Unseen, solemn)

It's Robert, Michael.

MICHAEL

What's Up Robert?

SUSAN sits up in bed.

10/INT.. CAMBRIDGE; KITCHEN. NIGHT.

ROBERT (*continues*)

It's bad, Michael. Patty's Father has had a heart attack.

11/INT.. FUNERAL HOME. PHILADELPHIA. DAY

The official viewing of Susan's deceased father. Sad, but good natured. The differences of the two sisters, are illustrated by the differences of their respective friends. who are attending the viewing. SUSAN is wearing her usual bright red lipstick. Her friends are oddball characters, while PATTY's are well-kept ordinary "school teacher" types. The funeral introduces other members of the family relevant to the story. Elder sister CAROLINE is dressed in black, at the door conspicuously welcoming arrivals. Caroline's husband BIRT, stands by. Amongst the mourners SUSAN, is speaking to her brother CLYDE, and to her voluptuous wife JAN.

SUSAN

Well little brother, it looks like our big sister is in charge.

CLYDE *(looking over at CAROLINE)*

A natural leader, don't you think?

JAN

Now! Now! Siblings

SUSAN *(indicates pleasure at the arrival of a friend)*

Lonnie!

LONNIE (played by LONNIE DONEGAN, or an actor like him) is wearing a smart, but

loud, western suit, SUSAN walks briskly over to greet him, she pulls him away from the disapproving stair of CAROLINE and walks him over to PATTY who is talking to three female friends (soberly dressed school teachers)

SUSAN *(Interrupting PATTY)*

Patty! ... Remember Lonnie

PATTY

(Looking embarrassed but indulgent)

Sure, Hi

LONNIE

Good to see you Patty

PATTY

These are my colleagues from school.. Sally.. Becky. and Polly.

LONNIE

Hi, How did you know Patty's father?

Camera pans past the various groupings of guests, past MICHAEL who is uncomfortably close to CAROLINE and husband BIRT who sneeringly looks back in

Susan's direction. Tracking camera cranes high to show the open coffin for the first time in close proximity to the entire group.

MUSIC: Sad country music into the next scene

12/INT.. EALING. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Music fades. SUSAN is on the telephone to PATTY about the estate.

SUSAN

Patty, did you get the inventory from Carol's lawyer?

PATTY (Unseen)

Our lawyer, Susan!

SUSAN

So what's happened to the hall clock, Daddy loved that clock, God, rest him!

PATTY

That's right.

SUSAN

What's that bitch up to? I told daddy not to trust her.

PATTY

Take it easy Susan, If she wants the clock that bad, let her have it

SUSAN

Patty, think about it, Daddy was a collector: The pewter the silver spoons, the miniatures. You showed no interest in that stuff, but Daddy loved it.. Shall I go on; the Wedgwood, the watches.

PATTY

The Bitch! ... What is she up to?

SUSAN

Pat, you've got to think about this. we've got to work on our own inventory. We owe it to Daddy.Some sister, we have...

PATTY

I'll never go shopping with her again. I'll call Clyde see what he thinks.

SUSAN

O.K! Love to the boys.

13/EXT.. CAMBRIDGE PATIO/DECK. DAY.

PATTY is lounging on a wicker chair with her feet up. She is writing. She puts down her pen, picks up the telephone, dials and waits.

PATTY

Hi!

SUSAN (unseen)

My list is in the mail to you, Pat. There's too much to discuss on the phone. What about yours?

PATTY looks down to a notepad next to a glass of iced tea, on her outdoor coffee table, where she has written one item. She has written "SOWING BOX"

PATTY

I'm working on it. I called Clyde.

SUSAN

What's he think?

PATTY

Hi,. says he doesn't give a shit about the spoons.

SUSAN

What?

PATTY

He cares all right, not about the spoons, but about the money. His business is going belly up.

SUSAN

Again?

PATTY

Again!

SUSAN

So he doesn't want to get his hands dirty, but if we manage to screw his evil sister, he will quietly take his share and run. Michael's the same. Wont have anything to do with it. Too sordid... Too fucking

PATTY

Guess what! Birt has quit his job.

14/INT.. EALING. KITCHEN. DAY

SUSAN

Son of a bitch!

MUSIC: Sharp country song, into next scene.

15/INT.. PHILADELPHIA. FUNERAL HOME. DAY COLOUR SATURATED PHOTOGRAPHY

Close-up, previously seen, of BIRT sneering at LONNIE. (Refer to scene 11)

16/INT.. CAMBRIDGE. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Close-up of ROBERT telephoning MICHAEL to discuss their wives

ROBERT

Michael, what's going on with these women

MICHAEL (unseen)

They're getting a little excited are they not?

ROBERT

Michael, Susan is getting Patty worked-up. She has no time for William. All she talks about is her father's junk.

Camera pulls back to reveal the kitchen which is in a mess.

17/INT.. BROTHER CLYDE'S RESTAURANT. CHARLESTON.

The restaurant is not busy. A few undesirable customers are making mischief.

CLYDE phones SUSAN about their father's estate.

CLYDE (*into phone*)

Darling sister!

SUSAN (*unseen*)

Hello Clyde.

CLYDE

Susan, I want you to know that I'm right behind you with what you and Patty are doing. I was a little reluctant at first, but when I found out that, that gold-digging bastard had quit his job..

SUSAN (Unseen)

Thanks Clyde.

CLYDE

There is something odd about that man. Why' Caroline would take up with such a loser.....?

CLYDE looks up and notices his lack of Patrons.

SUSAN (*unseen*)

He killed a woman didn't he?

CLYDE

In the army, yeah! Accident!

SUSAN

They threw him out?

CLYDE

1 don't know.....

CLYDE looks up and sees three kids scratching their names on to the table in a booth.

CLYDE

... Hey get out of there.

18/INT.. EALING. BEDROOM. DAY

MICHAEL overhears a fragment of a whispered conversation between SUSAN and PATTY on the telephone. (The first hint of a murder theory.)

SUSAN

... He killed a woman, god damn it

19/EXT.. EALING HIGH STREET. DAY.

SUSAN is walking aimlessly along the public footpath. She stops at a public telephone box and leans against it, looks up into space. She gets into the box and phones MICHAEL. She is upset.

SUSAN (*fighting back tears*)

Michael, take me out to dinner tonight.

20/INT.. PIZZA EXPRESS, EALING. NIGHT.

MICHAEL and SUSAN are eating and argue about things getting out of hand. SUSAN is getting drunk.

MICHAEL

Enough is enough Susan. I know that you have natural sentimental concern for your father's stuff, but there are more important things to consider.

SUSAN

Is that right?

MICHAEL

Yes! Patty and Robert.

SUSAN

Patty is with me 100%, and all Robert thinks about is his own precious domestic tranquillity.

MICHAEL

And William? Do you think that he will forgive you if you break-up his parents.

SUSAN

He'll get over it ... And who said their marriage is breaking-up. Don't exaggerate, Michael

The WAITRESS, JUNE, who is also a friend, approaches the table, and noticing the empty bottle ...

WAITRESS, JUNE

Celebrating, are we Susan? ... More wine Robert?

ROBERT nods.

SUSAN (*To June*)

June, I trust you. I have to tell someone I can trust, someone who will listen. My father was murdered by my brother-in-law. He's a killer.

MICHAEL (*exasperated*)

Susan!

WAITRESS (*Condescendingly*)

Well, if that's what you think Susan, You must see it through. Who's to say that its not perfectlypossible.

MICHAEL grimaces, with frustration.

21/INT.. CAMBRIDGE. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

PATTY, driven on by SUSAN, has become more assertive. She fights with her husband, ROBERT -

ROBERT

What's going on?

PATTY

What do you mean.

ROBERT

Pat, let's put an end to this nonsense. You tell me what you want and you can have it. We want nothing from that witch of a sister of yours

PATTY

Anything for a quiet life, is that it?

ROBERT

If you don't like our "quiet life", why don't you move to London.

22/INT.. CAMBRIDGE. LOUNGE. DAY

Close-up of POLICEMAN who reacts to off-camera PATTY who is telling him the story

PATTY (*Off-Camera*)

We noticed a blue mark on his face when he was laid out. We're convinced that it was our brother-in-law, Birt. He's nuts.

He killed a woman in the army, and he was chucked out. They are evil. Check it out. They are manipulating my father's estate to their advantage. This is not just my opinion, My sister in England believes this also. So does my brother in Charleston. Birt Mathews killed my father.

23/INT.. PHILADELPHIA COURT. DAY.

Close-up on the JUDGE who is reacting to the POLICEMAN who is telling him the story, off-camera.

POLICEMAN (Off-Camera)

Your Honour, three members of the deceased's family have registered with me, their belief that there has been foul play, leading to the death of their father. I request that we are allowed to examine the remains to conclude this matter, at this time.

JUDGE

What evidence do you have, officer?

POLICEMAN (Off-Camera)

We're simply following up a deposition your honour.

JUDGE

OK! Let's have him up then. I will make the order.

24/EALING. KITCHEN. DAY.

Angry reaction of MICHAEL.

MICHAEL

Now see what you've done. I don't believe it. They're exhuming your father. My god Susan, what are you going to do now. They're digging him up. Why?

SUSAN (*trembling*)

They are doing it, not.....

MICHAEL (*interrupting*)

You've got to stop them Susan. You've got to get over there.

25/EXT.. HEATHROW AIRPORT. DAY

MICHAEL gives a frosty farewell to SUSAN.

No dialogue.

LONNIE DONEGAN singing I've Got Rocks In My Bed

26/INT.. EALING. LOUNGE. NIGHT

MICHAEL and two friends, PAUL, and IAN, are watching the Ryder Cup Golf Tournament on TV, live from America. There are many opened cans of beer. There is a chauvinistic expectation of a European victory. We see a long putt drop, and all three cheer gingoistically.

The telephone rings. MICHAEL walks over to the phone. Simultaneously, PAUL gets out of his chair, and demonstrates a putting stroke on the carpet. MICHAEL picks up the telephone.

MICHAEL
Hello.

CLYDE (*unseen*)
Hello Michael. It's Clyde

MICHAEL (*Excitedly*)
Clyde! Are you watching the golf?

MICHAEL is embarrassed by his over-excitement, and fumbles an explanation.

MICHAEL
I've got some friends over Clyde, drinking beer, watching the match. Don't tell Ss..

CLYDE (*Unseen*)
There's been some developments Michael.

MICHAEL
Developments?

CLYDE (*unseen*)
Susan can't handle it. She needs help I think.

MICHAEL
What kind of help? What do you mean?

JAN (*Unseen, Interrupting*)
Tell him Clyde.

MICHAEL
Jan?

JAN (*unseen*)
For Christ's sake tell him Clyde. Susan has been running amuck, terrifying everyone. She thinks she's John, the Baptist.

MICHAEL
John, the Baptist?

We hear cheers from the unaware PAUL and IAN, in the background.

CLYDE (*unseen*)
Susan has lost her mind, Michael. She and Patty have flipped.

MICHAEL
Patty? Where is Susan, Clyde?

CLYDE (*unseen*)

She's OK Michael.. She's in Weston, a hospital in West Virginia.

MICHAEL

Jesus! What happened?

CLYDE (unseen)

She's OK Michael. Susan, and Patty arrived here on Tuesday; they had William with them.

They were just acting crazy. There was a post-mortem on Dad ... and it seemed that they had proof; proof that he died of natural causes. The girls couldn't take it. The pressure got to them.

MICHAEL

Both of them.

CLYDE (unseen)

They were pretty wild. Yelling abuse at complete strangers.. at customers

27/EXT.. Charleston. MOTEL SWIMMING POOL. DAY.

COLOUR SATURATED PHOTOGRAPHY.

The camera pans, close-up, focusing on various astonished swimmers standing in the pool, facing the camera directly.

CLYDE (voice-over)

They were irrational, Michael. They had it in their heads, that Daddy was alive. Susan said that she, "had been to the mountain." She told me that, I killed the Kennedy's

... and Abraham Lincoln.

(fades)

Camera continues to pan, eventually discovering SUSAN, standing in the shallow end of the swimming pool. We see her baptising WILLIAM, as PATTY looks on approvingly, and passing her plastic jugs of "Holy" water.

28/EXT.. MAC DONALD'S PICNIC AREA. EXT..

Michael wraps up the diary and prepares to continue his journey.

29/EXT.. ROUTE 40 , BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS WEST VIRGINIA. DAY.

Long view of Michael's rental car driving through the landscape.

30/EXT.. ROUTE 40. JUST OUTSIDE WESTON. DAY.

Journey continues. Wide view of the deprived town of Weston from the approaching road.

31/EXT.. WESTON STATE HOSPITAL. DAY

MICHAEL arrives at the hospital and is alarmed. He finds not a "hospital" but a decaying Gothic institution with the words, "LUNATIC ASYLUM" in elaborate, rusty wrought iron, forming part of the outer perimeter fencing.

The camera traces the path of Michael's approach, through the gates around the gravel driveway past a collection of oddball, and unkempt characters, many wearing cycling crash helmets.

MICHAEL parks his car and looks up at a decaying, stone clad, mansion.

MICHAEL is reminded of those Romanian orphanages. He notes the bars on the windows and the trash. He walks up the flight of steps to the "grand" entrance.

Inmates are passing the time of day.

32/INT.. WESTON. CORRIDOR LEADING UP TO A RECEPTION AREA. DAY.

MICHAEL finds his way through decaying corridors.

We hear the sound of inefficient, clanking air conditioning units.

There are mental casualties everywhere.

MICHAEL approaches a reception counter, where a casually dressed male RECEPTIONIST has his feet up, reading a magazine. The man sees him approach and sits up to take his enquiry.

RECEPTIONIST

May I help?

MICHAEL

My name is Harrison. My wife was admitted here last week.

The RECEPTIONIST calmly looks through a scruffy ledger

MICHAEL

I have just arrived from England.

RECEPTIONIST looks up from the ledger with his eyes only.

RECEPTIONIST

Would you like some coffee?

Wait, let me call the Duty Doctor, then I'll arrange something.

RECEPTIONIST picks up the telephone and MICHAEL looks grateful for the friendly gesture. He steps away from the counter as the RECEPTIONIST makes his call. A patient (JIMMY) wearing a crash helmet and a sickly grin approaches him and puts his hands up, as if praying. MICHAEL looks concerned.

RECEPTIONIST

Leave the man be, Jimmy. Don't worry about him Mr. Harrison. The duty officer will be here in a moment. Here he is now.

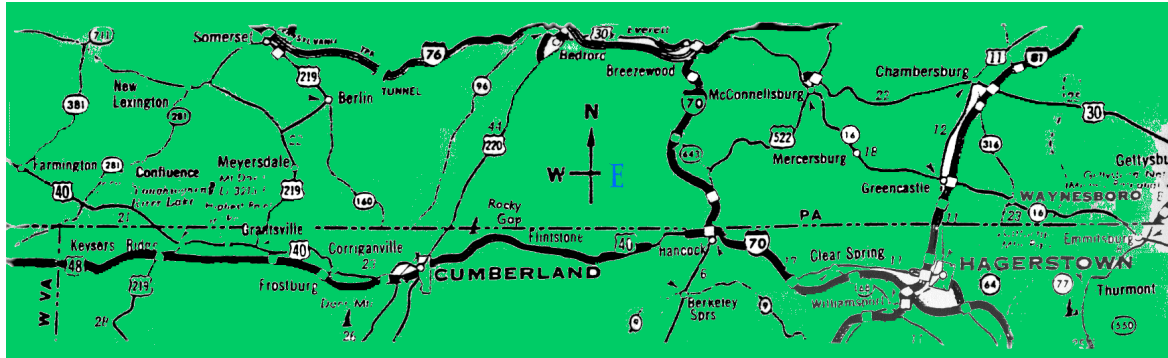
A young man dressed in blue jeans and a loose summer shirt approaches with an outstretched hand.

JUNIOR DOCTOR

Mr Harrison?

MICHAEL acknowledges, and shakes his hand.

JUNIOR DOCTOR
You've come a long way. How was your trip? Come up to my office. I'll get some coffee.



33/INT.. WESTON. INTERVIEW ROOM. DAY.

MICHAEL and the JUNIOR DOCTOR are in a featureless room, sitting either side of a simple table, upon which, sit two mugs of coffee.

JUNIOR DOCTOR

I should explain that your wife's doctor is not here today since it's the weekend. His name is Doctor Mitchell. He'll be here on Monday.

MICHAEL

My wife's sister was taken ill at the same time, you know. I'd like to arrange for SUSAN to be transferred to the same hospital, if possible.

JUNIOR DOCTOR

Do you have any insurance?

MICHAEL

Err! No, but I have credit cards.

JUNIOR DOCTOR

Well! ... We're talking, maybe \$10,000

Michael's mouth falls open.

MICHAEL

May I see Susan?

34/INT.. WESTON HOSPITAL. CORRIDORS. DAY.

MICHAEL is taken along the corridor by the JUNIOR DOCTOR, eventually to a large heavily secured door.

35/INT.. WESTON HOSPITAL. CELL BLOCK - DAY

MICHAEL passes through the door. Inside is a large open area with closed cell doors leading off. SUSAN is waiting in the corner wearing clothes given to her by the hospital, (a tidy, but dowdy outfit comprising of a cotton shirt, and outsize summer shorts and no lipstick), She had been told that MICHAEL was there to see her.

MICHAEL approaches her, and tries to take her hand. She smartly withdraws her hand, and with same hand she points dramatically, and literally shows him the door, the heavy fortified cell door.

36/EXT.. THE STREETS OF WESTON. DAY

MICHAEL leaves the hospital and drives around the town. The camera follows his route and we discover the neglected town.

MICHAEL (voice-over)

The town is an extension of the hospital; the hospital is neglected, the town is neglected. Not even a Mac Donald's.

37/INT.. WESTON MOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.

MICHAEL is putting away his diary and considers his gloomy position drinking a beer.

MICHAEL (voice-over continues)

It has taken me three days to get here.

They tell me, that at least Susan agreed to see me. "Take heart", they said, "try again tomorrow. "Would you like some coffee?" Coffee!

MICHAEL take a long swig of beer.

38/INT.. WESTON HOSPITAL. OFFICE.

MICHAEL is surrounded by a hospital "team". Behind the single desk, is the SENIOR DOCTOR MITCHELL, and either side of the desk is the JUNIOR DOCTOR, two SOCIAL WORKERS, a HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR and a LIAISON OFFICER They are all dressed as they please; either in smart outfits, or in blue jeans and "t" shirts. (No white coats) DOCTOR MITCHELL is in casual dress and he is chairing the meeting. MICHAEL appears impressed but concerned.

SENIOR DOCTOR MITCHELL

Mr Harrison, I understand that you are here under difficult circumstances, and that you would prefer to return to London. We sympathise, of courseIt may be to early, for us to make an assessment, particularly since Susan is not exactly co-operating

When do you have to return?

MICHAEL

Well, Susan has a ticket for her return on Friday; that would be an ideal day to return.

DOCTOR MITCHELL glances over to a SOCIAL WORKER, who gives a non-committing Gesture

DOCTOR MITCHELL

We have been working with Susan, and well, shall I say, we have not yet determined the right course of action. Susan is alert, and articulate, but deeply

suspicious. She is also rather artful, we feel, and this can make it a little difficult for us.

I should make it clear though, that she certainly will need treatment, and if she agrees to go with you to London, our strategy would be to delay the start of her treatment.

For one thing it would make it difficult for your doctor in London to make a diagnosis and also she would not physically be able to complete the journey if we started to say.. .. embark on a course of medication.

MICHAEL

Drugs?

DOCTOR MITCHELL (*becoming upbeat*)

Look! We have a week. In view of Susan's present frame of mind , why not spend a day or so with Susan and then, take off for a few days. I understand that you want to visit Susan's sister in Maryland. Then go ahead. Trust me. A few days will make all the difference.

MICHAEL

OK ... Thanks.

The meeting breaks up. On their way out of the door the JUNIOR DOCTOR takes MICHAEL by the arm in a friendly gesture, and guides him.

JUNIOR DOCTOR

Tell me, does your wife really think her father was murdered?

39/INT.. WESTON. CELL BLOCK.

All doors are open within the cell block. The large open area is crowded with PATIENTS.

All are women with various idiosyncrasies. Some are crying. One FLIRTATIOUS LADY in her late thirties, approaches MICHAEL, and makes eyes at him. Most of the PATIENTS are manic in some way or another. MICHAEL finds SUSAN in a corner and approaches her.

SUSAN (*angrily*)

"Where have you been?"

MICHAEL shows the slightest smile.

MICHAEL (voice-over)

I took this be a favourable greeting, and braced myself for an afternoon with Susan, and the girls. SUSAN walks off slowly, as if challenging him to follow. MICHAEL follows and they wander over to a different part of the ward.

MICHAEL

Well, **we** are making progress.

SUSAN is shown reacting angrily as voice-over of MICHAEL continues to describe ...

MICHAEL (voice-over)

She demanded to know what had transpired at the meeting. Susan took it that the, "we", meant me and the team. That is.. we, "evil" co-conspirators, on the right side of the cell door who were deciding her fate.

I talked to her for an hour, and answered her questionsIn fact, what might have set her off, was, as I learnt later, that one of the social workers had told Susan that they were sending her to London. Susan had given her hell, they say.

40/EXT. WESTON. THE GROUNDS. DAY.

MICHAEL and SUSAN are walking about the grounds of the hospital past a scruffy baseball diamond, where an impromptu game was taking place between some patients.

MICHAEL (voice-over)

I was surprised that Susan was allowed out with me for a walk in the grounds. Today she had a better heart knowing that she had been ill, and also, that she had not exactly recovered.

Actually, I felt, that she had recovered

JIMMY, wearing his usual grin, is pretending to play baseball. He is running about meaninglessly. He sees SUSAN and MICHAEL and stops running. He blows MICHAEL a kiss. SUSAN looks at MICHAEL and they walk on as if nothing had happened.

MICHAEL (voice-over continues)

... I was starting to feel better myself.

MICHAEL (Calmly overstating)

We're Prisoners

SUSAN

Mmmm...

MICHAEL

You want to go shopping?

SUSAN

Mmmm...

MICHAEL

Dr. Mitchell is going to give us the go ahead; I feel it in my shopping trolley. And you can have a new wardrobe. New dress. New knickers. LIPSTICK!

SUSAN reacts favourably to the reference to lipstick.

They are unaware that JIMMY is following them. JIMMY is imitating MICHAEL, who is walking in a stilted and somewhat unnatural fashion. They are almost relaxed, but SUSAN is holding back, still, on any real display of affection.

MICHAEL is not discouraged. He steals a hug and kiss. SUSAN doesn't object.

41/EXT.,

WESTON HOSPITAL GROUNDS, DUSK

MICHAEL and SUSAN are strolling around the grounds, holding plastic beakers of coffee. There is no physical contact but they are content.

MICHAEL (*voice-over*)

After dinner I picked up Susan, and we took another walk. Her mood had continued to improve. We bought some coffee, and walked over to the library.

42/EXT., WESTON HOSPITAL LIBRARY, DUSK

A run down outbuilding. MICHAEL is waiting outside.

MICHAEL (*voice-over*)

I waited while she made her selection

SUSAN appears, out of the door, hugging three large scruffy books.

MICHAEL (*voice-over*)

... a book on Scottish clans, two books on the Civil War, plus an article on the hospital.

43/EXT. WESTON HOSPITAL GROUNDS, DUSK

A quiet picnic table under some trees. MICHAEL watches as SUSAN leafs through the books, maniacally sifting information.

MICHAEL

Don't tell me, ...you are the lost heir of the Mac Donald's clan?

SUSAN looks surprised

MICHAEL

Susan,you are not related to Ronald Mac Donald.Trust me!

SUSAN

Go back to London. You should be ashamed.

I AM SICK, and you haven't even brought my make-up! I HATE YOU.

44/E XT, WESTON HOSPITAL CELL BLOCK, DUSK

MICHAEL walks SUSAN to the cell block. She strolls off-course toward a group of retarded people, goes amongst them and makes fifteen instant friends. SUSAN rejoins MICHAEL and he sees her to the cell block door. She is regretful but stubborn.

MICHAEL (*voice-over*)

I walked her back to the ward. I knew that she wanted me to linger awhile, but she wouldn't ask me to stay

MICHAEL turns away and departs.

45/EXT.. ROCKY GAP. DAY.

Michael's Rental Car drives through the Gap.

MICHAEL (*voice-over continues*)

.... so I left. I drove to Charleston. I stared at tarmac for another five hours, and considered abandoning my wife.

46/EXT.. CHARLESTON. CLYDE'S RESTAURANT. TWILIGHT.

MICHAEL drives into the restaurant car park. The restaurant is situated across the road from the MOTEL WITH POOL (refer to scene 27) which is brightly lit, but empty. MICHAEL parks the car and gets out. There are four other cars in a very large car park. He pauses, looks up at the neon sign reading, "CLYDE'S", walks over to the door, and enters.

47/INT.. CLYDE'S RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

The camera follows MICHAEL as he enters. He walks over to the maitre-de's station and looks around, as he waits. There are no customers. He waits for some time, and eventually an unglamorous WAITRESS appears through a swing door, from the kitchen.

WAITRESS

You want to eat?

MICHAEL

Err! ... Yes.

WAITRESS

We're closing the dining room.

MICHAEL

Is Clyde here? I'm hi...

WAITRESS (*Interrupting*)

Who wants to know?

MICHAEL

His brother-in-law.

WAITRESS

Sounds Kosher! You'll find him in the bar.

The WAITRESS nods in the direction of an opening in the corner, beyond an ocean of empty dining tables, with bright red tablecloths. He walks over. As he approaches, JAN appears,. and is surprised.

JAN

Michael!

JAN grabs MICHAEL and hugs him.

JAN

You just got in? You must be tired! Clyde's serving in here, come on through.

48/INT.. CLYDE'S RESTAURANT BAR, NIGHT

JAN and MICHAEL walks through the opening. They find CLYDE behind the bar leaning on his elbows looking up at a flickering TV. high up on the wall showing, a rerun variety show.

Two CUSTOMERS sit at the bar and are also looking up at the TV. CLYDE turns to face MICHAEL as he enters.

MICHAEL

How are yer? Brother-in-law.

CLYDE (*taking MICHAEL'S handshake*)

Michael! Good to see you.

MICHAEL

Sorry to spring it on you Clyde, I should have telephoned.

CLYDE

What a crock! Have a drink Michael. Cold beer? Come on, it's on the house.

The two customers stir, and turn to face each other. CLYDE ignores them. Camera fades.

49/INT.. CLYDE'S RESTAURANT BAR. NIGHT.

Close-up of MICHAEL laughing. Camera pulls back to reveal that CLYDE, JAN, and MICHAEL are at a corner table, and have had a few drinks.

CLYDE

I'm sure that Susan. enjoyed being locked up in that gaol. We went up there to see her, but she wouldn't let us in. She saw us though, through the bars of her cell window, on the second floor. We were crossing the road on our way back to the car, and she gives Jan a wolf-whistle.

CLYDE laughs. MICHAEL smiles.

JAN

Very funny!

MICHAEL

Defiant!

CLYDE

My darling sister..... she will always give a good performance; an actress. First playing John the Baptist, and now, Joan of Arc.

MICHAEL

No! now it's Ronald Mac Donald's big sister.

Two men in leather western jackets walk into the bar. CLYDE looks concerned, gets out of his chair, walks behind the bar, and serves them.

Pause. JAN speaks softly to MICHAEL, but her eyes are looking sideways at CLYDE and company.

JAN

Michael, we have to tell you something. You know, business is not exactly booming around here.

MICHAEL pretends to be surprised.

JAN (continues)

We're going bankrupt - Those men at the bar sold us this business. They run the hotel across the street. They are crooks. They made out that the business was worth 25,000 dollars, which is what we paid for it. We've lost everything.

MICHAEL

That's rough!

JAN (*looking at MICHAEL*)

Look at all these decorations we put in here. The mirrors behind the bar cost us 5,000 dollars.

We have a plan If we just leave this placethose bastards will get the lot: the mirrors, the booze, that's the stock in the bar, the tablecloths the toilet rolls. The bar closes at 2, in the morning and the restaurant, opens at 6, to serve breakfast. We plan on loading our stuff on to Clyde's "Pickup," or as much as we can, and getting it out of here TonightWill you help!

MICHAEL

....tonight?

JAN

Between 2, and 6.

MICHAEL

Sure! ... OK Can I just get a few hours sleep?

MICHAEL looks over at CLYDE, at the bar, who returns a knowing glance.

50/1NT. CHARLESTON CLYDE AND JAN'S HOUSE. CHILD'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.
MICHAEL is sleeping

MICHAEL (*voice-over*)

I was unprepared for the late night, moonlit flit arranged by Clyde. I was exhausted but how could I refuse? I asked Clyde to call me at the house when the bar had closed,....

The bedside telephone rings.

MICHAEL (*voice-over continues*)
.... and he did.

MICHAEL awakens and picks up the telephone.

MICHAEL
Hello OK Clyde... .It's OK Clyde ...OK. Clyde OK OK. Clyde.

MICHAEL gets out of bed, dresses and makes for the door.

51/EXT.. CLYDE'S RESTAURANT. NIGHT

MICHAEL is bent double supporting a freezer on his back, trying to load it onto the back of Clyde's rusty old pickup truck. CLYDE is at the other end trying to pull on it. JAN is standing by gesticulating.

MICHAEL (*Voice-over*)

We started with a large freezer from the kitchen. A heavy brute, made lighter by the adrenaline which passed through my veins as Clyde explained the urgency of the exercise. He explained that if the owner knew that they we were shifting things out of the restaurant, there would be Trouble.

As they work, CLYDE makes a throat-cutting gesture with his hand.

MICHAEL (*voice-over continues*)

Jan elaborated on the tale by explaining that this man in question had threatened her the previous Friday. Apparently, he had grabbed her tits in front of Clyde and squashed her face..

JAN demonstrates by squeezing her breasts. and squashing her face. MICHAEL looks alarmed.

MICHAEL (*voice-over continues*)

.... with a line like "You've got a pretty face, haven't You?"

Synchronised with the above, CLYDE mouths the gangster's quotation. They finally hump the freezer into position, and collapse exhausted.

JAN (*mischievously*)

D'you have "Knee-capping" in England, Michael?

MICHAEL and CLYDE look at each other, and are simultaneously galvanised into further action.

52/INT.. CLYDE'S RESTAURANT BAR. NIGHT.

MICHAEL, CLYDE and JAN are frantically loading booze into boxes.

MICHAEL (*voice-over*)

All things considered, we decided to proceed with due haste. We grabbed bottles of booze with due discrimination according to the fullness of the bottles. Full bottles were taken greedily, half-full bottles were accepted gratefully, and anything less was approached with agonising indecision. As time went on, the decision making became less demanding.

Quarter bottles of brandy were abandoned to the mob, without a second glance.

CLYDE holds up a quarter full bottle of Remy Martin to the light and discards it.

53/EXT.. CLYDE'S RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

MICHAEL is on the back of the truck. CLYDE is passing boxes to him. JAN is fetching boxes from inside.

CLYDE (*sheepishly*)

There may be a problem starting the truck. They complete the load. He gets in to start the engine. He makes the sign of the cross. He turns the key, but it fails to start.

CLYDE (*forced calm*)

Yep! Dead.

MICHAEL

Jumper cables?

JAN

At the house, in the trunk of the car.

MICHAEL

I'll go. Let me have the keys Clyde.

CLYDE tosses the keys

54/EXT.. CHARLESTON ROAD. NIGHT.

Close-up on MICHAEL running.

MICHAEL (*voice-over*)

I sprinted. Perhaps a little gratified, not having to stay around the restaurant where the hoods might show.

MICHAEL looks over his shoulder, as he runs, He sees the motel swimming pool.

55/EXT.. CHARLESTON. MOTEL WITH POOL. DAY. COLOUR SATURATED PHOTOGRAPHY

SUSAN is baptising a child in the swimming pool. By the pool side, the gangsters look on.

56/EXT.. CLYDE'S HOUSE. NIGHT

MICHAEL arrives breathless. He gets into his rental car, checks for jumper cables and then drives off.

57/EXT.. CHARLESTON ROAD NIGHT

Close-up of MICHAEL driving past the Swimming Pool. He has an apprehensive look on his face.

58/EXT.. CLYDE'S RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

MICHAEL pulls up, offering CLYDE the cables. CLYDE sets about hooking them up.

CLYDE

Now, there is a little hole in the exhaust.

MICHAEL

How big?

CLYDE spares MICHAEL the answer and turns over the engine.

The truck explodes into life. The noise might wake the dead. Again, fear galvanised them into action. They drive off with the first load.

59/EXT.. CLYDE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

They all arrive noisily and hurriedly unload, depositing boxes everywhere, and anywhere. A light is turned on in the neighbour's house. They all pause, anxiously and then continue unloading.

60/EXT.. CLYDE'S RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

They return coasting the last 50 yards to reduce the noise.

61/EXT.. CLYDE'S RESTAURANT. DAWN

They complete the second load, hook-up the cables, pause, look at each other knowingly, and then start the truck, which again, explodes into life.

CLYDE

Wait, I think I'm going back for more beer.

CLYDE and JAN smile, and get into the truck. MICHAEL's worry evaporates and he gets into his car. They drive off, MICHAEL follows.

62/EXT.. CHARLESTON ROAD. NIGHT. 6:00 a.m.

MICHAEL follows the truck in the car and looks at the black smoke coming from the exhaust. CLYDE looks back at him in the mirror and lets go with the horn. MICHAEL drives on the straight road, and the truck forks off to the right.

MICHAEL (voice-over)

We got two loads out of there, with five minutes to spare before the early staff were due to arrive, to find out, no doubt, that they had lost their jobs. They would then, surely, have blown the whistle.

63/EXT.. BAY BRIDGE. DAY.

Michael's rental car drives over the bridge. MICHAEL rubs his eyes, and then the untidy stubble on his face.

64/EXT.. CAMBRIDGE. ROBERT'S HOUSE. EVENING.

MICHAEL drives up to the modern American home, parks the car, and walks up to the front porch. ROBERT and PATTY's 5 year old son, WILLIAM, runs out of the house to greet him. WILLIAM takes MICHAEL by the hand and pulls him, excitedly, towards the house. ROBERT comes out on to the porch to greet him. He is unshaven, and concerned.

ROBERT

Heard you were on the way Michael.

*Behind them the front door to the house opens, and Robert's Parent' s emerge.
(MR HENLEY, MRS HENLEY)*

MICHAEL

Hi Mr Henley,... Mrs Henley.

MR HENLEY (*looking embarrassed*)

Hello Michael, (*turning to ROBERT*) We've got to go Robert.

ROBERT

I know Dad. Thanks for your help Mum. ...Say goodbye William

They make their way to their-car, parked alongside the house. MICHAEL and ROBERT stand, side by side, and watch them prepare to leave.

ROBERT (to MICHAEL)

They've been baby-sitting.

MICHAEL (to ROBERT)

They blame Susan, don't they?

ROBERT (to MICHAEL)

No,.. No Michael. Of course, they are worried, but ...

ROBERT places his hand on Michael's back.

ROBERT

Bye Mom Bye Dad

They drive off

ROBERT

Come on, let's have a drink.

65/EXT.. CAMBRIDGE. ROBERT'S HOUSE-PATIO. NIGHT

MICHAEL and ROBERT lounge and drink beer.

ROBERT

Michael, I can only see this thing ending in divorce.

MICHAEL

How is Patty?

ROBERT

God only knows. She is looking for trouble, the whole time.What about Susan?

MICHAEL

She showed me the door. I don't know what to think. But she is ill Robert I guess, Patty is the same way.

ROBERT

She might be sick now, Michael, but she and Susan did run off, and there's been aggravation in this house for months. What did Susan's doctor have to say?

MICHAEL

They say that it's serious, but then they have to say that, or let her go. Susan is giving them a hard time, but that's Susan I'm optimistic.

ROBERT (*being positive*)

We'll drive up tomorrow and see Patty.

MICHAEL holds up his beer bottle in a toast.

MICHAEL

Health!

66/EXT.. HOSPITAL. CAMBRIDGE. NIGHT.

ROBERT drives his Dodge People Carrier with MICHAEL beside him. They are clean shaven, and have dressed up for the occasion. They drive into the parking space and look up at an immaculate 4 storey modern building in a manicured landscape, akin to a luxury hotel. They get out of the van and walk into the building.

67/INT.. HOSPITAL RESTAURANT. DAY.

PATTY is sitting between MICHAEL and ROBERT, at a table in the hospital restaurant. There are fresh flowers and linen table-clothes on each table. Waitresses pass by, wearing smart outfits. Conversation between them is tense.

ROBERT

Great hospital.

PATTY

What are you doing here Michael?

MICHAEL

I came to see you Pat.

PATTY
Huh!

MICHAEL
Are they taking care of you Patty?

PATTY
Great table-clothes!

ROBERT
Patty sees her doctor every week, and the staff are great here.
A polite waitress appears.

WAITRESS
Can I get you more coffee?

ROBERT
No thank you. We'll have the bill please.

WAITRESS
Room No?

MICHAEL
Here, let me get this?

ROBERT
Don't worry Michael. They take good care of you here,.... It doesn't cost a cent

PATTY
I can smell Betty.

PATTY is looking directly ahead looking into camera. MICHAEL and ROBERT look at each other

PATTY
I can smell Betty

The tranquillity of the restaurant is upset. Heads turn.

MICHAEL
Steady Patty.

PATTY looks at ROBERT.

PATTY
You've been with that whore again, haven't you?

PATTY gets up and leaves the table without excusing herself, and wanders off.

ROBERT (*under his breath*)
Jesus!

MICHAEL
Don't worry Robert.

ROBERT
Michael, Betty is 80 years old. She's a neighbour.

There is a long pause. MICHAEL looks around. Handsome doctors, wearing surgeons tunics and informal smiles, converse with patients. There is no hint of illness anywhere.

ROBERT
I'd better find her.

ROBERT leaves the table, and walks off . MICHAEL also gets up and wanders over to some lounge chairs in a quiet corner. He puts his head back, and rests his eyes. Along the corridor, in long shot, a familiar scruffy figure, JIMMY, wearing his usual crash helmet is shuffling towards the restaurant. A car horn blasts and ROBERT opens his eyes and the mirage of JIMMY disappears. MICHAEL gets up and looks out of the second floor window.

68/EXT.. PIZZA RESTAURANT. DAY.
PATTY is walking, naked, across the street, and into the restaurant. In pursuit, ROBERT follows her until out of view.

69/EXT.. BAY BRIDGE. DAY.
Close-up of MICHAEL driving as he returns over the Bay Bridge.

MICHAEL (*Voice-over*)
Patty never did get her Pizza.
Patty and Susan were being treated for the same affliction, but Patty had table-clothes.
I wondered if Susan would have a "naturalist" turn, on the way back to London ...

70/EXT.. CHARLESTON. CLYDE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.
MICHAEL arrives at Clyde's house, rubbing his eyes.

MICHAEL (*voice-over, continues*)
... Clyde was halfway to Susan,...

At the last moment, MICHAEL changes his mind, and drives on.

MICHAEL (*Voice-over continues*)
... but it didn't seem like a resting place.

71/EXT.. CHEAP GAP MOTEL. NIGHT.

MICHAEL approaches the motel, weighs it up, and decides to stay. He parks the car and enters.

72/EXT.. BAR. NIGHT.

MICHAEL walks into a bar, which is dark and almost empty. He takes a seat at the bar. A LADY BARTENDER is reading a newspaper. She spots MICHAEL, folds the newspaper and puts it to one side.

LADY BARTENDER

Yes sir, what can I get you?

MICHAEL

A beer please.

LADY BARTENDER

Mich? It's on draught.

MICHAEL

Fine.

LADY BARTENDER

You want a warm glass?

MICHAEL

How considerate! ... but I'll take it as it comes.

The LADY BARTENDER smiles and MICHAEL watches her pour the draft beer carefully into a frosted glass mug. He admires her. She throws down a coaster and places the beer which is overflowing with an icy fog.

LADY BARTENDER

That's how it comes

MICHAEL

Thank you! May I buy you a drink?

LADY BARTENDER

What part are you from?

MICHAEL

What part?

LADY BARTENDER

Where are you from? Did I say "what part" Where are you from? Where are you from? That is the question. Not what part. Parts are what cars are made of.

MICHAEL

Angel Road, No 47 Ealing, West London United Kingdom May I buy you a drink? I hate drinking alone. It is not done is it? Customers don't buy drinks for Bartenders As they do in England.

LADY BARTENDER

We do prefer tips.

She laughs

LADY BARTENDER

In fact, it's not allowed. If I oblige you by drinking with you, I'd get fired and I would not get paid, not that I rely on my small wage. I rely more on my tips you see.

MICHAEL

You have mentioned tips twice. Is it because I am English

LADY BARTENDER

It did not even cross my mind that I would get a small tip because you are from that part.

MICHAEL

May I call you May.

LADY BARTENDER

You may but my name is not May.

MICHAEL

Pity, I do see you as a month of the year.

LADY BARTENDER

Here today, gone tomorrow?

MICHAEL

. Why not"Miss September"? I love September

She pulls a crooked face.

LADY BARTENDER (*Muttering*)

January, February April June

73/INT.. PIZZA EXPRESS, LONDON. NIGHT.

Close-up of JUNE serving.

JUNE

Who's to say, that it's not perfectly Possible?

74/INT.. CHEAP GAP BAR. NIGHT.

MICHAEL's thoughts return to the LADY BARTENDER.

MICHAEL

You could drink from my cup, September. You wouldn't be breaking any house rules if you drank from my glass.

LADY BARTENDER

If I drank from your glass, I would be breaking my rules.

MICHAEL acts cool, The LADY BARTENDER picks up his glass and takes a long swig.

MICHAEL

What time do you get off September?

75/EXT.. GAP MOTEL OUTSIDE
MICHAEL'S ROOM. NIGHT.
*MICHAEL and the LADY BARTENDER
approach Michael's motel room She
hangs on to his arm.*

LADY BARTENDER

When are you leaving?

MICHAEL

1 just got here.

LADY BARTENDER

How long are you staying?

MICHAEL

I haven't got long.

*MICHAEL opens the door to his room,
she pauses to consider the invitation
and then enters. MICHAEL follows.
They stand awkwardly beside the bed
facing each other.*

LADY BARTENDER

Where are you heading?

MICHAEL

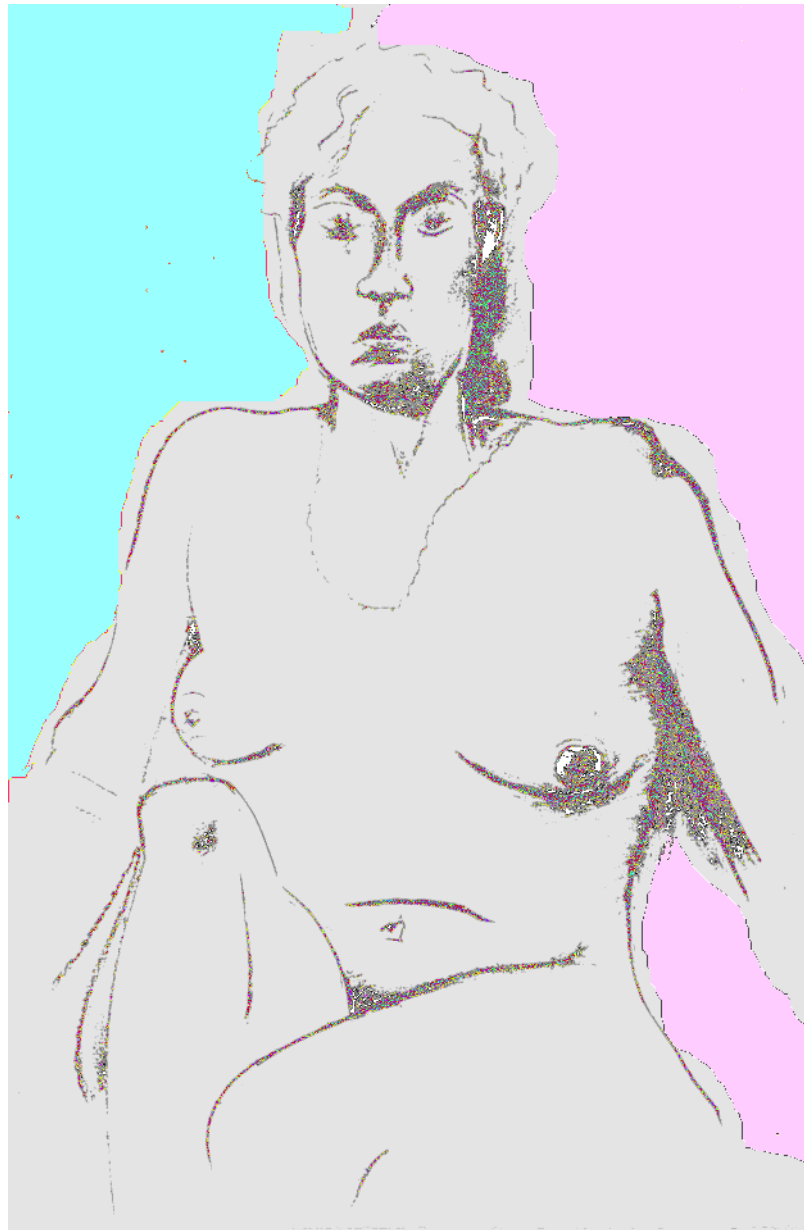
London.

MICHAEL fumbles with the front of her dress looking for buttons.

LADY BARTENDER

Where are you coming from?

MICHAEL



Cambridge, Maryland.

LADY BARTENDER

You are going in the wrong direction.

The LADY BARTENDER turns around and offers MICHAEL a zipper on the back of her dress.

MICHAEL

That was not a question.

MICHAEL'S hands examine the contours of her body, without groping.

LADY BARTENDER

Do you have any kids.

MICHAEL

No.

LADY BARTENDER

Do you have a wife?

MICHAEL

Now, you ask?

LADY BARTENDER

That was not an answer.

She spares him the need to answer, by kissing him. They roll onto the bed.

LADY BARTENDER

Will you take me with you?I'm stuck here Rescue me.

MICHAEL freezes. The LADY BARTENDER weighs-up his reaction and starts to weep.

MICHAEL

Wait! ...

LADY BARTENDER (*Weeping*)

I'm sorry. You must have excited all the wrong hormones.

MICHAEL

My fault.

LADY BARTENDER

No, you were right. I should have asked my questions before ... but I figured that you are just passing through. You are leaving tomorrow aren't you?

MICHAEL

Yes. I'm sorry.

MICHAEL embraces her and stares at the wall behind her.

76/EXT.. CUMBERLAND GAP. DAY.

MICHAEL drives through the gap. A country song about "cheating hearts", is playing on the radio. His diary is beside him. He fumbles through the notepad, until he finds the last entry. He tears out the page, and stuffs it into the glove compartment. He thinks again, and retrieves the paper, crumples it into a smaller ball, and tosses it out of the car window. He looks back regretfully.

77/EXT.. WESTON MOTEL. NIGHT.

MICHAEL arrives at the motel, He parks the car, and as he gets out, pauses, and looks out over the town, and at the imposing feature of the hospital.

MICHAEL (Voice-over)

I returned to Bedlam.

He walks over to the motel office.

MICHAEL (Voice-over continues)

Tomorrow, I meet the "Team" I must prepare myself for their argumentsThey might think that Susan is not ready, or that she might run away, or worse; run amok.

MICHAEL collects his room key and makes his way, to his room.

MICHAEL (Voice-over continues)

I will have to have my wits about me; I might even lie to get her back. "Yes, Susan trusts me," I will say, I'll have no doubts, and anyway, if anyone can handle her, I can handle her."

MICHAEL walks into his room, opens a beer and lays back on the bed.

MICHAEL (Voice-over continues)

My marriage is in their hands. Susan is at their disposal, and she hardly gives a shit.

78/EXT.. WESTON HOSPITAL. OUTSIDE CELL BLOCK. DAY.

Close-up of the back of MICHAEL looking up at the hospital building. The camera follows MICHAEL as he approaches the building. He walks up to the cell block door. He pauses and glances back at the car. The camera catches a breathless expression on his face.

79/INT.. WESTON HOSPITAL. CELL BLOCK. DAY.

MICHAEL proceeds into the open area. The camera follows him. A male nurse passes by, acknowledging him as he enters. Many patients are milling around and turn their heads in his direction. Some, tentatively walk toward him. From amongst

them, SUSAN appears. She has a delighted expression and walks briskly through the group. They meet, they pause and then embrace. The other patients surround them. MICHAEL takes SUSAN by the arm and they make their way along the ward. After a few steps the FLIRTATIOUS LADY runs from the other end of the ward, and throws herself to the floor, sliding dramatically at MICHAEL'S feet, sobbing uncontrollably. MICHAEL bends down and pulls her to her feet with one arm, while holding onto SUSAN with the other arm.

MICHAEL (*Voice-over*)

Susan said that she had had no visitors.

The camera focuses upon the FLIRTATIOUS LADY looking up at MICHAEL from the floor.

MICHAEL (*Voice-over continues*)

I felt like Jesus. Susan seemed impressedI was beginning to feel good for the first time in two weeks.

80/EXT.. SHOPPING MALL. DAY.

MICHAEL and SUSAN are walking through the centre of a glitzy shopping mall. They are hugging each other as they walk. SUSAN drops Michael's arm, and walks off toward a perfume counter.

MICHAEL (*Voice-over*)

Susan was allowed out of the grounds for the first time. She new exactly where she wanted to go.

81/EXT.. WESTON HOSPITAL. DAY.

MICHAEL takes SUSAN back to the hospital to be locked up. (a formality). They pause at the doorway, reluctant to part.

MICHAEL

Let's sit awhile.

They sit at the picnic tables just outside, sharing it with two scruffy patients, HOWIE and another man. HOWIE speaks with a tough New York accent. He offers SUSAN a cigarette, ignoring MICHAEL.

HOWIE

Smoke?

SUSAN raises her arm to take a cigarette, but notices he has just two cigarettes in a crumpled Pack.

SUSAN

Here, have one of mine.

Susan offers her pack, and HOWIE takes three cigarettes.

HOWIE

What are you in for?

SUSAN

Baptism.

SUSAN laughs. MICHAEL frowns.

SUSAN

I'm crazy..... I was crazy.

SUSAN frowns. MICHAEL smiles.

HOWIE

Crazy! You ain't crazy. He's fucking crazy.

HOWIE points at JIMMY who is strolling by talking to himself.

MICHAEL

Susan, you were due back, 10 minutes ago.

SUSAN

You're right.

SUSAN gets up, hugs MICHAEL, and walks off.

MICHAEL (*forced conversation*)

What are you guys here for?

HOWIE

Me! I'm voluntary, I could walk out of here tomorrow.

MICHAEL

What happened?

HOWIE

I shot a cop.

MICHAEL looks over at SUSAN who is waving from the cell block door.

MICHAEL

I spared Susan this information, but later, she remarked, that Howie ... had made a lot of sense.

82/INT.. WESTON HOSPITAL. INTERVIEW ROOM. DAY.

MICHAEL and DR. MITCHELL are alone. MICHAEL is concerned.

DOCTOR MITCHELL

Well! we have settled the matter with the court and we are ready to let you go
Sorry, to sound officious. Michael, you should realise that in your best interest, you must place Susan in the care of your doctor in England.
This of course is my "friendly" advice to you, but I'm afraid that I do have some rules to give you, which will apply while you are on this side of the Atlantic.

MICHAEL
Sounds painful.

DR MITCHELL
When you leave here, you must go directly to the airport. On no account make any detours on the way to the airport to visit any of Susan's family, especially PattyShe might try to tempt youI don't think that you will have any problems
Just try to avoid any possible conflict, and try to keep her calm. I'm sure-that you will make it home, OK

MICHAEL
Thanks a lot.

MICHAEL gets up and shakes his hand.

83/INT.. WESTON HOSPITAL. DAY.
Close up of SUSAN wearing bright red lips, and a new multicoloured shirt, but keeping her outsize hospital-issue shorts. She is surrounded by her eccentric friends, hugging each in turn. The FLIRTATIOUS LADY is hugging MICHAEL, and won't let go. Some other patients pick up on the mood, and also begin hugging each other, detached, as it were, from SUSAN'S imminent departure.

MICHAEL (*Voice-over*)
Susan greeted me with some excitement but she was not eager to leave her friends. I felt that the experience was somehow compelling to her. Certainly a milestone.

84/EXT.. ROCKY GAP. DAY
MICHAEL and SUSAN, are driving through the gap. SUSAN is talking animatedly and with great excitement.

MICHAEL (*Voice-over*)
Soon she had found herself again. Amusing, short-tempered, demanding, imaginative, excited and exciting. No Angel, but herself It will not be the same again, our life, but at least this crisis, is over.

85/INT.. DULLES AIRPORT. NIGHT.
MICHAEL and SUSAN wait in the departure lounge overlooking a rain-swept airport. They look out, as lightning flashes, over the tarmac. MICHAEL reassures SUSAN.
Meanwhile, an eight year old hyperactive BOY is making mischief .
In the background is a duty-free shop, with an elaborate window display of cut glass and perfume. The BOY gets into the display and carefully, but dangerously makes his way between the exhibits, and then poses as a mannequin.

86/INT.. BRITISH AIRWAYS BOEING 747. DAY.

The flight is underway. MICHAEL and SUSAN are holding hands, content.

MICHAEL (*Voice-over*)

A four and a half hour delay! ...Susan has become uncharacteristically thoughtful. She had contemplated the thunderstorm as if her life depended upon it. She's not the only concerned passenger on board, but I doubt if anyone here is interpreting the elements in quite the same wayI'm sure that she is sad, that Patty was snatched from her; it must be playing on her mindNevertheless, Susan has become surprisingly warm, in these last few hours.

MICHAEL looks across at SUSAN and smiles.

A steward passes.

MICHAEL (*to steward*)

Do you have any British newspapers?

SUSAN takes a toothbrush out of her handbag and gets up out of her seat.

A steward hands MICHAEL a Guardian with the headline, THATCHER DENIES PRIVATISATION OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE.

MICHAEL ignores the cover and turns to the sports section. He glances over his shoulder to the toilet. The camera follows his glance by Steady-cam, along the aisle to and through the toilet door.

87/INT..
BRITISH
AIRWAYS
BOEING
747,
TOILET.
DAY.
*SUSAN sits
in a
claustrophobi
c panic. She
notices a
tartan scarf,
left behind.
and she
responds
favourably.*



*This has
some significance to her, and her fear dissipates. She opens the door to the toilet,
and looks out into the cabin.*

88/INT.. BRITISH AIRWAYS BOEING 747. DAY.

SUSAN steps out of the toilet. All the passengers have their backs to her, but they are unmistakably, angels. Some have wings, some have halos, some gentle smiles.

Even the Boy who is listening quietly to his headset, has adopted a cherubic pose. She returns to her seat. MICHAEL ignores her and continues to read his newspaper. She takes his hand and relaxes. She glances out of the window where a mirage of LONNIE DONEGAN and his skiffle band are on a white cumulous cloud performing "DOES YOUR CHEWING GUM LOOSE IT'S FLAVOUR ON THE BEDPOST OVERNIGHT"

Production Credits.

Further Music as Credits Roll; "CUMBERLAND GAP"

THE END



POST SCRIPT

I have replied to readers, who have responded to "The Cumberland Gap", as follows :

23, July 1992

Dear Nick,

I am grateful and impressed by your comments on my script. I'm not at all precious about it and I would gladly make substantial amendments to make it work. As you will have realised, but were afraid to mention, the story is autobiographical; for Michael read Arto. Very little was embellished or exaggerated, even the angels. Nevertheless, as a drama, I accept that it must have integrity. I won't be slavish about the facts.

You obviously saw it as being about mental illness and of course it is, but I was really trying to consider more, the carers who become involved.

Not just Michael, who was of course a loving carer and I've tried to deal with him honestly enough, but the core of the piece and really the very reason for writing it, was in order to deal with the institutional carers in America, seen by many as a model for Tory aspirations for our health service.

Clyde, the brother, since you asked, was supposed to care but he was embroiled in his own problems and had a quite different perspective.

My actual experience took me from a notorious public institution/hospital to a glamorous private hospital where the sister was being attended to, for the same affliction. The contrast in environments was shocking. But I believe that better care was provided in the UK; remember the example of "neglect", where Patty was allowed to walk naked out of the hospital and across the road into a fast food restaurant.

Why The Cumberland Gap? It was as if they were hiding their shame behind the mountains. Because the "lunatic asylum" was such a dominant and terrifying gothic presence in the town, people feared not just the hospital, but the town itself. I met people who had never been there, who actually trembled when I spoke of it. The town really is the only town in America that doesn't have a Mac Donald's, to my knowledge. (A telling anecdote, don't you agree) The gap then is a pretty obvious, and a spectacular gateway to this somewhat mythologised place.

Why Lonnie Donegal? Ian, tried to talk me out of this, also. Perhaps you're both right. He (Donegan) did of course have a hit with the song, and I thought it needed a light touch here and there. I tried to use him in a puckish sort of way, turning up dramatically as a cowboy at the funeral and consequently reflecting Susan's potential madness, by association, as it were. And later I needed an angel, so he seemed to fit the bill.

You are encouraging me to explain the reason for the madness. My experience tells me that any two doctors could hardly agree, and too much analysis is too much bullshit. Basically, and here comes my bold, unqualified assertion: all breakdowns are the result of stress, causing chemical imbalance in the brain, and all psychiatrists are chemists, administering chemicals by trial and error until the worry goes away.... or not.

Without the drugs, the brain does the best it can to make the patient feel good, by inventing angels, or perhaps in the case of those inflicted with "the inferiority

complex", by providing them with delusions of grandeur. (i.e.. John the Baptist) As you can see, I can get a little reactionary about this, I would prefer to let others do the psycho-analysis.

I take your point about the father's funeral having little relevance to the plot, particularly since it was not really the actual death of the father, that precipitated the breakdowns, but the murder theories which developed and ultimately, the exhumation of his body. The funeral was really there to introduce the protagonists in one go. This is, of course, a bit of a cinematic cliché, but at least I've avoided the graveside scene, in the rain, with the umbrellas.

The transatlantic shift? I have worried about this, because so many British films feel compelled to use American "angles", and also because of the dangers of making two different films, and not gelling. (Even the light is different.)

I'm going to think about this? I think it depends on the market, I suppose.

Thanks for taking it seriously; that makes two. I had put the whole thing aside recently in order to concentrate on gainful employment. You have recharged my batteries. All of this is good practice for my promotional appearances on The Late Show.

I almost forgot. The other important and recurring theme is the infallibility of all concerned. The misunderstandings. The doctors cannot admit to this of course, but they are more guilty because they pretend to know what they are doing with an inexact science. They have a tough job. My most serious misunderstanding was in thinking that the patient had recovered when in fact she was still seeing angels.

If we're in London in September, I'll see you then for more therapy.

Regards,

Arto.

