

SIXTEEN MINUTES

by
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FADE IN ON

EXT. DESERTED STREET - SMALLTOWN, USA - DAY

Weeds grow in every crack on the asphalt and concrete. Store windows are either boarded up or missing or broken.

No one's here anymore.

The ROAR of an engine is heard. It's getting closer.

An old pick-up truck turns quickly onto the street, tires SQUEALING. Black smoke pours out from under the hood. The front suffered damage; it hit something big.

The cab is encased in metal bars, making it a cage on wheels.

STEVE (V.O.)
Slow it down, Lizzy!

LIZZY (V.O.)
There's no time!

The truck sideswipes a dirt-covered car. Sparks fly as paint is exchanged.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

LIZZY (25) fights the steering wheel for control as STEVE (55) yells from the passenger seat. Her hair is cut short and simple. Her face, though pretty, is devoid of makeup, or anything feminine.

STEVE
Slow it down, I said! Christ! I thought you said you could drive a truck!

LIZZY
Sorry! I'm sorry!

Steve is gruff and in need of a shave. And a bath. He holds a blood-soaked rag over his left hand.

STEVE
Sorry's gonna get us both killed!
Slow it down!

LIZZY
The cage is on this street, right?

STEVE
Yeah. Just look for the signs!

EXT. DESERTED STREET - CONTINUOUS

The truck speeds down the street, passing abandoned vehicles and stores. Evidence of old fires and violence are seen.

The truck drives over a long decayed corpse.

STEVE (V.O.)
Time!

LIZZY (V.O.)
Eight minutes. Thirty seconds...
Where's the cage?

STEVE (V.O.)
Straight ahead. There's the sign.

The truck blows past a rusty stop sign. Spray painted on it is a square with an X through it. On top of the box is an arrow, pointing up.

Steve GROANS.

LIZZY (V.O.)
You all right?

STEVE (V.O.)
No, I'm not fuckin' all right!

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Lizzy splits her attention between Steve and the road.

LIZZY
We're gonna take care of it!
You're gonna be all right.

She cuts the wheel. The cab rocks. Steve glares at her.

STEVE
Not if you keep driving like this!
I'm better off fuckin' walking!

LIZZY
I'm sorry--!

EXT. DESERTED STREET - CONTINUOUS

The truck pulls up in front of an abandoned BUTCHER SHOP.
It's brakes GRIND to a halt.

The same box is spray painted over it, with an arrow pointed
to the double-padlocked door.

LIZZY (V.O.)
We're here, Steve. We're here!

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Steve opens the door, tossing the padlocks inside. Lizzy
stands behind him, shotgun in hand. Her head spins around,
looking up and down the street.

Steve pulls a pistol from a belt holster and cautiously walks
in, looking around. He kicks the padlocks further in. They
slide across the dirty floor.

STEVE
What's the time?

Lizzy enters, waving her weapon around the shop. She closes
the door behind her.

The shop is sparse. The display cases and shelves are dark
and empty. Old, timeworn signs hang on the walls.

In the middle is a cage made of heavy-duty wire, the size of
a small room. An X is painted across it. In it is a bench
and several crates, marked FOOD, WATER, AMMO, etc.

Lizzy looks at her watch.

LIZZY
Ten minutes.

The two look around, ready to shoot at anything that moves.

Steve opens a padlock on the cage and swings the door open.
He grabs a paramedics medical kit and drags it out, knocking
over a box. K-rations fall out on the floor.

He sets it on the counter, next to his pistol. He quickly
takes off his shirt.

Despite his age, he looks extremely fit.

On his chest is a faded tattoo of an eagle, anchor and globe. The emblems of the US Marines.

STEVE
Get over here.

LIZZY
How's it look?

She steps up and looks at his hand.

It's bloody. A jagged piece of flesh is missing.

The skin around the wound is sore and swollen. Veins leading up his arm are visible through the skin, thick and dark.

LIZZY
Oh my God...

Steve fishes through the medical kit. He finds a journal and slides it across the counter to Lizzy.

STEVE
Get in the cage.

LIZZY
What?

STEVE
Get in the cage! We're wasting time.

LIZZY
You serious?

STEVE
We're following the rules! To the fucking 'T.' Now get in the cage.

Reluctantly, she takes the journal and enters the cage. She locks it from the inside with a heavy latch.

Steve pulls various items from the kit and places it neatly on the counter.

INSERT - FIRST AID KIT

On the lid of the kit is a laminated card.

"VIRAL ASSISTANCE INSTRUCTIONS"

Hand written instructions and charts.

BACK TO:

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Steve looks over the supplies.

STEVE
What's the time?

Lizzy glances at her watch, holding the open journal with one hand.

LIZZY
Uhh, twelve minutes since you got
bit.

Steve looks at the chart as he ties an old rubber hose around his upper arm.

STEVE
The kit says we got twenty minutes,
maximum, to treat the bite.

He grabs a syringe and pulls the cap off it with his teeth. He grabs two small bottles of clear liquid. He sticks the syringe into the first.

STEVE
Forty cc's of amoxicillin and sixty
cc's of cephalioxide.

He draws medicine into the syringe and then sticks the needle into the second bottle.

He glances over at Lizzy, watching anxiously.

STEVE
You're writing all this down,
right?

Startled, Lizzy starts writing things down in the journal.

LIZZY
I'm sorry--

STEVE
Concentrate, Lizzy. You got the
easy job, here. You just gotta
write this shit down! That's all!

LIZZY
I'm sorry. I'm sorry--

STEVE
Don't be sorry. Just write the shit
down! What did I say?

LIZZY
(hesitant)
Forty cc's of...

He looks at Steve, struggling and flustered.

STEVE
Forty cc's of amoxicillin and sixty
cc's of cephalioxide!

He puts the bottles on a small shelf beneath the cage window.
He sticks the syringe into a dark vein in his arm.

STEVE
The time on that?

Lizzy splits her attention between her watch and the journal.

LIZZY
Twelve minutes. Twenty seconds.

STEVE
Be sure that you write the serial
numbers down on the bottles, too--

Steve buckles over, GROANING. Lizzy looks at him, panicky.

LIZZY
Steve!

STEVE
(pained)
Stay in there! Don't come out!

She grabs the latch and unlocks it. He sees this and throws
himself against the door, preventing it from opening.

STEVE
Do not come out...! You're in
there 'cause you're safe in
there...

LIZZY
But you need me--

STEVE

I need you to listen and follow orders, for fuck's sake! This is why I chose you as my new partner over your brother. He didn't listen!

He moves away from the door--

STEVE

Me and Paul Grayson came up with the idea for cages eighteen years ago. Zombies trapped us in a petting zoo in East Corning.

And slowly stands up.

STEVE

We locked ourselves in a cage and waited them out until help came. They couldn't get us. And as long as you're in there, no one can get you. You got food, water and ammo in there. Last you a week.

He feels his chest, pressing his fingers into the skin.

STEVE

Write down I'm feeling... stomach cramps. And chest pains.

LIZZY

Chest pains?

STEVE

My heart's racing. Write this shit down. Everything.

He turns to the first aid kit and reads off the chart.

STEVE

The doctor wants it all written down.

LIZZY

Steve, he's just some Jew doctor from Connecticut. He doesn't know about--

Steve rushes the cage and slams his body into it. Lizzy jumps back, shocked.

STEVE

He's a doctor! An immunologist, or
some shit! Follow what he says.

Steve notices Lizzy's stare.

STEVE

What?

LIZZY

Y-your eyes...

The whites of Steve's eyes are red. The veins are dark red.

Steve steps to the shop counter and looks at himself in a
piece of polished stainless steel.

STEVE

Time! Write it down!

Lizzy scribbles something in the journal.

LIZZY

Thirteen minutes thirty seconds...
Eyes turning red...

Steve fumbles through the first aid kit.

STEVE

Write down that... that my hands
feel cold. Feet do, too.

He pulls out another bottle of medicine.

STEVE

Directions say to...

He swallows hard.

STEVE

To administer--to shoot me up with--
50 cc's of vitamin E--

LIZZY

Fifteen or fifty?

STEVE

Fifty! For Christ's sake, Lizzy.
Take the shit outta your ears!
Five! Zero!

Lizzy writes in the journal as Steve injects himself.

STEVE

And you're supposed to be writing
anything down that you see.

LIZZY

Like what?

STEVE

Like how I'm behaving. Am I
slurring my words? Do I have
problems concentrating--?

The front door bursts open. Lizzy and Steve turn and see--

A woman stands in the doorway, wearing ragged clothes. Her
skin is rotted and dry, ripped in various places. Her eyes
are blood red and cloudy.

She GROWLS!

Steve grabs his pistol from the counter and fires--

BLAMBLAMBLAM!!

Two shots rip open her head. She falls to the ground.

Steve stays in a shooting stance as Lizzy grabs her rifle and
shoves the barrel through the cage's small window.

Extremely long silence....

He puts his pistol down on the counter and closes his eyes.
She looks at him.

Awkward silence....

LIZZY

Steve? Fifteen minutes...

He doesn't move. His veins are visible through his skin,
over his shoulder and back. Can't be sure if he's even
breathing.

LIZZY

Steve?

Lizzy pulls her rifle back into the cage.

LIZZY

Steve?

STEVE
(beat)
I'm still here...

Lizzy SIGHS in relief.

Steve turns around, exhaling.

STEVE
I don't want to turn into one of
them. You hear me?

LIZZY
(insecure)
You won't...

STEVE
Those fuckers took... my wife and
my daughter twenty years ago.

Steve looks back at her from the corner of his eye.

STEVE
She was your age...

He turns and faces him. Sadness fills his face.

STEVE
You just keep writing everything.
So everyone knows.

LIZZY
Including... including her?

She points to the zombie.

STEVE
Everything! What you write may be
what ends this shit. It could help
the doctor come up with a cure.

He opens his pistol. Spent shells bounce off the counter as
a speed loader slides six more rounds in. He slaps it shut.

He turns his attention back to the medical kit.

STEVE
We been fighting zombies with guns
for... twenty years. We ain't
winning. Bullets stop the zombies
but the virus... still spreads.
Medicine's the next step.

He places the adrenaline bottle on the shelf to the cage.

STEVE

Write down the numbers on the...

He freezes in thought.

Lizzy looks at him, waiting.

LIZZY

The numbers on the bottle?

Steve snaps out of his daze.

STEVE

Yeah... That...

LIZZY

You okay?

Steve turns to the first aid kit and fumbles through it. Dropping the items on the counter.

STEVE

Sheila and Carol were infected in the first days. I saw them change... And I ran.

He turns his head, looking around. After a moment, he spins around and looks at Lizzy.

His eyes are blood red and his skin is dry and pale. His lips are badly chapped and cracked.

LIZZY

(to herself)
Oh shit.

STEVE

(raspy)
Hard... to think...

LIZZY

Fight it, Steve. Fight it!

His body twitches and he staggers.

A tear rolls down her cheek.

LIZZY

Come on, Steve! Don't give up!

Steve looks around, confused. Dark red saliva drips from his mouth. His breath is RASPY.

LIZZY

Please...

He slaps the cage with both hands, like a child throwing a tantrum.

Dropping the journal, Lizzy draws her shotgun, aiming at him through the bars.

Steve grabs his stomach and falls to the floor in a fetal position, GROWLING in pain.

STEVE

(raspy, slurred)

Rather be... dead...

Tears rolls down Lizzy's face. She keeps her weapon trained on him.

STEVE

Shoot me...

LIZZY

Oh Christ, Steve.

Steve slowly gets up. Grabbing the cage, he pulls himself to his knees. He looks at Lizzy through the small cage window.

She takes half a step back.

LIZZY

Steve?

Steve thrusts an arm through the cage window, thrashing. Lizzy jumps back.

STEVE

Hun...gry...

Lizzy pulls the trigger. Steve's face disappears in the EXPLOSION and smoke.

Minutes pass and the smoke clears. Lizzy slowly opens the cage door, aiming her weapon at the headless corpse on the floor. She gently kicks it a few times.

No response.

She uses her leg to roll the body over. Dead. She looks at the tattoo, still intact.

LIZZY

God...

She wipes the tears from her face, smearing the thin layer of dirt from her cheeks.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - SMALLTOWN, USA - SHORT TIME LATER

Lizzy pours a quart of oil into the engine. Her shotgun hangs over her shoulder, which she constantly looks over.

She replaces the oil cap and closes the hood. Taking one last look around, she climbs into the truck and drives away.

She passes a small funeral pyre, containing two smoldering corpses. Steve's tattoo is visible on one of them.

FINAL FADE OUT: