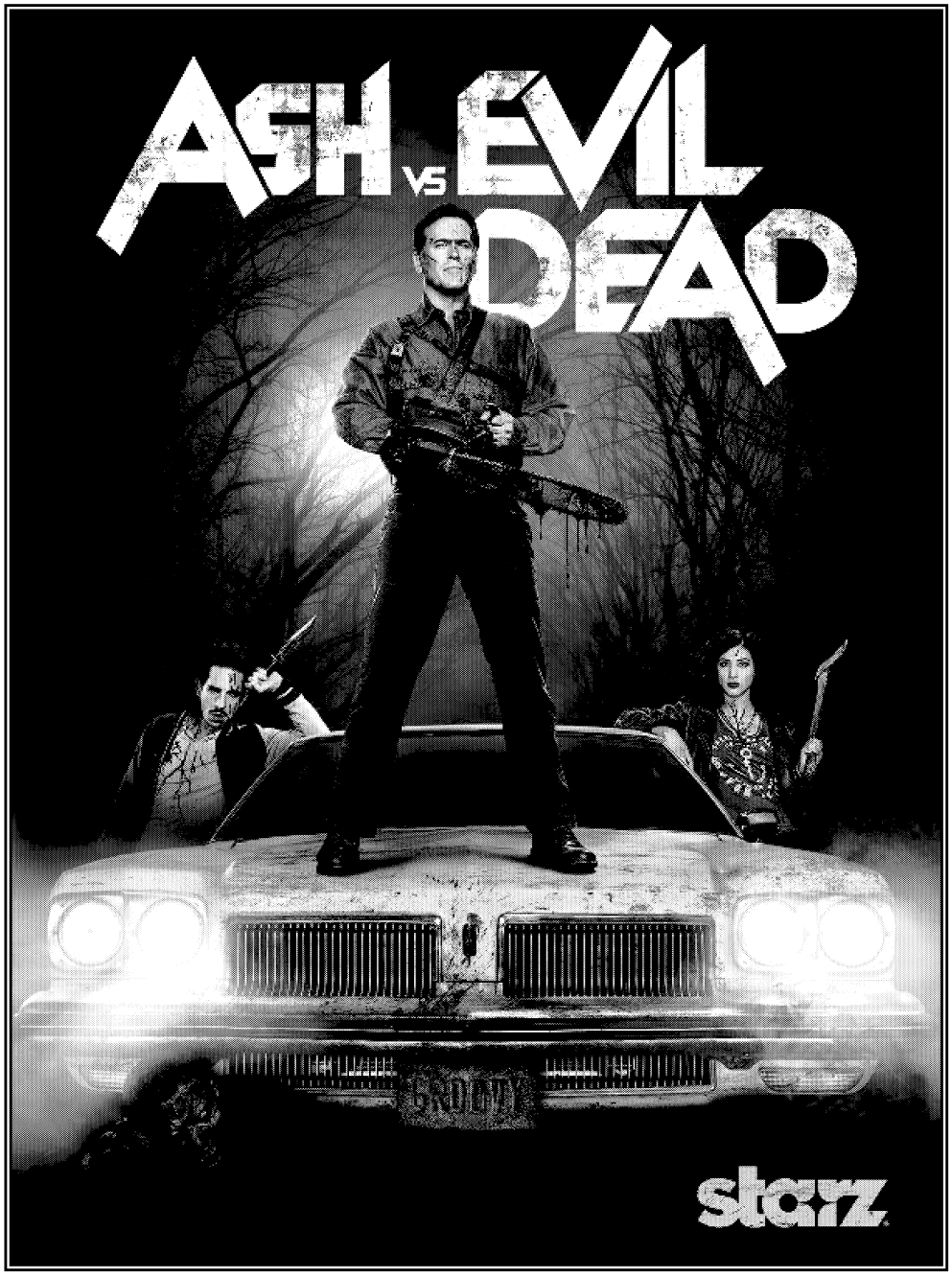
ASH VS EVIL DEAD - PILOT EPISODE



PILOT EPISODE

by

Sam Raimi & Ivan Raimi

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ASH vs EVIL DEAD

(Pilot)

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EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

A DARK SEDAN crawls along a dirt road. Headlights off. Prowling. Leaves CRACKLING under wheels. Rhythmic. Eerie. It comes to rest a short distance from a RUNDOWN CABIN.

A pair of seasoned FBI AGENTS, FISHER, 30s, a dispassionate beauty, and CARSON, 30s, an easygoing charmer, step out. They take in the scene: There's a SUV parked in front. The driver's door hangs open. Dome light on. No sign of life.

CARSON
Should we wait for sunrise?

FISHER
(nope)
If anyone's still alive in there -- won't be if we wait.

Carson retrieves a pump action SHOTGUN, secures a FLASHLIGHT to the barrel. He considers Fisher's puny REVOLVER.

CARSON
I don't get why you wouldn't want to go in with more firepower.

FISHER
Don't need it. I keep my eyes open when I shoot.

CARSON
I keep my eyes open.

FISHER
No. You flinch. Don't feel offended. It's an involuntary reaction to the recoil.

CARSON
And you have the power to override an involuntary reaction?

FISHER
It helps I don't believe in them.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Agents Fisher and Carson enter, weapons ready. Discover BLOOD everywhere. The recent residual of a slaughter.

They move into the kitchen, on high alert, carefully stepping over a CELLPHONE: FLASHING 911, when --

A FIGURE springs from the shadows -- once human, now a white-eye, possessed, DEADITE. BLAM! Carson hits it in the chest.

The Deadite staggers but KEEPS ADVANCING. Carson unloads: BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! The Deadite is ripped to pieces. It drops. Half its head gone.

Two more DEADITES explode from the shadows. Fisher FIRES, drops the first. She pumps bullets into the second Deadite -- yet it still manages to knock her to the ground. A fierce struggle ensues. The Deadite savagely trying to sink his teeth into her. Fisher takes aim --

CLICK. She's out of bullets. Shit.

The Deadite lunges -- BLAM! It's head EXPLODES. Fisher is momentarily confused. She turns, realizes it was Carson's shotgun that did the trick.

CARSON
(big grin)
Eyes wide shut.

A brief moment of connection. And relief. Before --

FISHER
Behind you!

A TRAP DOOR has opened behind him. A Deadite grabs Carson by the ankle, upending him. He lands hard -- causing his shotgun to discharge. BLAM!

Errant buckshot strafes Fisher. She falls.

Carson's pulled into the crawl space. His shotgun left behind. It takes Fisher a second to recover. Her flashlight lost to her. She reloads and scrambles to the trap door.

INT. CABIN - CRAWL SPACE - NIGHT

Fisher lands in the crawl space. Vulnerable from all sides.

FISHER
Carson?!

A Deadite lunges from behind. She spins. BLAM! It drops.

FISHER (CONT'D)
Carson?!

CARSON (O.S.)
I'm here...

FISHER
Where?

CARSON (O.S.)
Follow my voice.

FISHER
No. You come to me.

CARSON (O.S.)
I can't move. Please...

FISHER
(nobody's fool)
I'm not going to do that, Charlie.

A standoff. An UNEARTHLY HOWL rises from the dark, as --

Carson appears from above, crawling like a spider. Eyes white. Possessed. Deadite. He lunges. Fisher manages to get her foot up in time to pin him to the floorboards.

He struggles. She takes aim. Carson's demeanor suddenly changes -- a vulnerable man. Her old partner.

CARSON
(pleading)
It's still me, Amanda. Please...
Help me... help me...

She appears to soften. He's getting to her.

Fisher forces her eyes shut.

FISHER
I am helping you.

She pulls the trigger. BLAM! Throwing us to--

BLACK. A somber moment. Then a title card appears:

EVIL DEAD

Still in BLACK. We hear a NEEDLE DROP. RECORD HISS. Followed by a STADIUM CROWD CHEERING. ROCK POWER CHORDS.

ROCK SINGER (V.O.)
ARE YOU READY TO ROCK & ROLL!?!

The STADIUM CROWD GOES WILD. Apparently they are.

FADE UP.

INT. STREAMLINE TRAILER - NIGHT

A cramped, bullet-shaped travel trailer. Cluttered and homey. *Deep Purple (Live)* BLAST from a record player, as --

We meet ASH HOLT, 50s, a man whose good looks have been softened by middle-age and a lifetime of poor eating habits. Ash boogies through his trailer, preparing for a night out.

Rock & Roll fuels his mojo.

DEEP PURPLE (V.O.)
WELL WE HAD A LOT OF LUCK ON VENUS/ WE ALWAYS HAD A BALL ON MARS/ WE MEETING ALL THE GROOVY PEOPLE...

ASH
WE'RE SPACE TRUCKIN' ROUND THE STARS...

Ash dons a pleather jacket. Splashes on cologne. Pockets breath mints. A condom. Exits the trailer. A beat.

Ash re-enters, having forgotten something important. His PROSTHETIC (WOODEN) HAND. He snaps it on his stubbed arm. Admires it: A thing of beauty. He exits.

EXT. ROADSIDE BAR - NIGHT

Ash pulls his Delta '88 into the nearly empty parking lot.

ASH
(a capella)
COME ON, COME ON, COME ON
LET'S GO SPACE TRUCKIN'

INT. ROADSIDE BAR - NIGHT

Ash enters, humming *Space Truckin'*. This is a straight up dive bar. Greasy bar nuts. Stale air. Wasted lives. He steps up to the bar. The BARTENDER checks his watch.

BARTENDER
We close in ten minutes.

ASH
Well aware.
(then)
Send me down a Moscow Mule and two of whatever the lady's drinking.

Ash motions to a woman, LUCY, slumped at the end of the bar. He sits, shoots her a smile. She politely nods. No spark.

Ash oh-so-casually rests his prosthetic on the bar. An icebreaker. Lucy tries not to stare. Can't help herself.

ASH (CONT'D)
It's rosewood. In case you're wondering. Hand carved by Italian artisans. You want to touch it?

LUCY
Sorry for staring.

ASH
Happens all the time. I suppose you're curious how I lost it.

LUCY
Well, yeah. A little...

ASH
Racing. A train. I was racing a train. The Central Illinois Blueline, to be exact.

LUCY
You poor man.

ASH
Don't feel sorry for me. I walked away from the crash. My lady was riding shotgun that night. Her name was Linda. She had the most beautiful green eyes. Voice like a songbird. And a need for speed.

LUCY
She died.

ASH
Thirty years ago to the day. That's why I'm planning to drink myself blind -- in her honor.

The Bartender places THREE DRINKS in front of them.

ASH (CONT'D)
(not missing a beat)
Care to join me?

EXT. ROADSIDE BAR - NIGHT

Ash and Lucy stumble out of the bar arm in arm. A car speeds up, cutting them off. An angry OLDER MAN hops out.

LUCY
Garland?

OLDER MAN
Get in the car, Lucy.

ASH
You never said anything about a boyfriend.

OLDER MAN
I'm not. I'm her sponsor. This woman has serious addiction issues. You should be ashamed of yourself!

ASH
Slow down, pal. I was just making sure the lady got home safe.

OLDER MAN
Is that true, Lucy? Am I wrong about this guy?
(off her hesitation)
Trust the program. Answer honestly.

LUCY
We had sex in the bar bathroom.

The older man glares at Ash, disgusted.

ASH
(point of clarity)
Consensual sex.

The older man drags Lucy to his car. Ash remains clueless.

ASH (CONT'D)
(calling after)
What? Don't believe me? I've got pictures on my phone!

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Ash drives home. Feeling good. Music BLARING. A operatic rock instrumental. ELO's *Fire On High*. (ABC Sports theme.)

The MUSIC DISTORTS. WHISPERING VOICES cutting through.

WHISPERING VOICES (O.S.)
Kanda... we... are... coming...

Ash is instantly spooked. He leans into the speaker.

WHISPERING VOICES (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Your... time... has... GLURP!

Cassette tape begins UNSPOOLING from the dash. Ash quickly shuts the player off -- eyes the messy tangle of tape.

ASH
Crap.

He rides in silence now. Night ruined. Voices forgotten.

And we PRE-LAP:

BOGGS (O.S.)
We are dealing with a plague. An unspeakable evil that has declared war on humanity.

EXT. WOODS - CABIN - MORNING

FBI AGENTS work with a C.D.C. HAZMAT CREW to secure the scene. FBI DIRECTOR BOGGS, 60s, imposing, delivers a sermon: an impromptu service for Agent Carson.

BOGGS
Special Agent Carson knew he was on the front lines of this war. Knew what he was getting into. Knew war was hell. That said, I don't think he ever expected to end up there.

Boggs gives the signal. Carson's body is dumped in with the Deadites. Crew armed with FLAMETHROWERS set the bodies and cabin ABLAZE. Agent Fisher betrays zero emotion.

BOGGS (CONT'D)
You need me to call in a grief counselor?

FISHER
Don't be an asshole.

They watch the BLACK SMOKE rise, blotting the sun.

CUT TO: TREE TOP VIEW

The cabin tiny below. Smoke billowing skyward -- enveloping US. We're now INSIDE THE SMOKE. A swirling caldron.

It coalesces into a SMOKE-STREAM and begins HURLING through the tree tops at breakneck speed, brushing branches aside. The SMOKE-STREAM breaks from the forest, revealing --

A trailer park. Ash's trailer park. His all aluminum Streamliner sparkling in the morning light.

The SMOKE-STREAM dives, smashing into the earth. We SWEEP along the ground, the smoke-stream energy traveling beneath the surface coming to rest UNDERNEATH Ash's trailer.

ROOTS begin to snake from the ground, securing themselves to the axel of Ash's trailer, like bony fingers of Evil.

EXT. ASH'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Ash steps outside, ready to start his day. He makes a beeline for the next trailer -- where is neighbor, MRS. JOHNSON, an aging floozy, tends to her tiny garden.

ASH
Morning, beautiful.

MRS. JOHNSON
Mr. Holt.

ASH
Hang on, there's something different about you this morning. It's like you're even more alluring than usual. New lipstick?

MRS. JOHNSON
You noticed!

ASH
What can I say? I love the painted ladies.

Mrs. Johnson titters. Considers this a complement.

ASH (CONT'D)
Um, can I ask you a tiny favor?

MRS. JOHNSON
For you, anything.

ASH
My cleaning lady's out sick again. Any chance you could tidy up my trailer? No heavy lifting of course. Just a little dusting.
(MORE)

ASH (CONT'D)
Some dishes. Laundry. Drain the waste water tank.

MRS. JOHNSON
For you, anything.

Ash hands her a pair of industrial grade rubber gloves.

ASH
You may encounter some clogging issues. Wouldn't want you to damage those luscious nails.
(then)
Speaking of luscious. Where's that niece of yours? Can't be late for work.

INT. ASH'S DELTA - TRAVELING

Ash drives. Mrs. Johnson's niece, KELLY, 22, a gloomy, striking beauty rides in the passenger seat.

AMBOY DUKES blasts from the cassette player.

KELLY
Can we listen to the radio?

ASH
Sorry. The old girl lost her antenna in '96. Cassettes only.

Ash rummages through tapes piled on the seat.

ASH (CONT'D)
Got plenty of other tasty bands here to chose from. Deep Purple. AC/DC. Styx.

KELLY
Forget it.

ASH
Okay. What kind of music you into?

KELLY
The non-shitty kind.

Ash turns off the cassette player.

ASH
We've been commuting to work for weeks.
(MORE)

ASH (CONT'D)
And all I know about you is that you were kicked off the family farm for mysterious reasons -- probably having something to do with your generally miserable attitude -- and sent to live with your aunt. Tell me something new. Something I don't know?

KELLY
Your cologne smells like cat piss.

ASH
Something about you I don't know. Like -- do you enjoy hitting the clubs? Dancing?

Kelly says nothing.

ASH (CONT'D)
Okay. Do you like to go to the movies? Or dinner and a movie?

Still nothing.

ASH (CONT'D)
How about back rubs? You dig a soothing, sensual rub?

KELLY
Why don't you just ask the question you're dying to ask.
(off his look)
Do I wear lace or thong undies.

ASH
What? No.

A silent beat. Ash grows fidgety.

ASH (CONT'D)
Now that's stuck in my head. Which one is it?

Kelly turns on the cassette player. Conversation over.

AMBOY DUKES (V.O.)
LEAVE YOUR CARES BEHIND
COME WITH US AND FIND
THE PLEASURES OF A JOURNEY TO THE
CENTER OF YOUR MIND...

EXT. TED'S CLUB SUPERSTORE - PARKING LOT - DAY

Ash pulls into the Ted's Club/Employee Parking lot. Kelly leaps from the car before he comes to a full stop.

INT. TED'S CLUB SUPERSTORE - DAY

We START ON A PATCH: "TRAINEE." WIDER REVEALS it is stitched on the work vest of PACO, 20s, a sweet natured Hispanic kid.

Paco stands at the break room window staring lovingly at --

KELLY, arriving for work. She sets up her register.

CLOSER ANGLE

Kelly counts out cash prior to placing it in the register drawer. She carefully lays out a stack of twenties -- stuffs them down her pants. (That's right, she's stealing.)

INT. TED'S CLUB - SUPERSTORE - BREAK ROOM - SAME

Paco continues his vigil. Ash joins him at the window. We note that "STOCKROOM MANAGER" is stitched to Ash's vest.

PACO
What were you able to find out about Kelly for me?

ASH
Nothing. I tried my best, but that girl's a locked box.

PACO
How am I supposed to ask her out when I don't know the first thing about her?

ASH
It's not that complicated. Just go talk to her.

PACO
Believe me, I've tried. Kelly practically runs away. It's like she considers me toxic. I can't for the life of me figure out why.

NEW ANGLE

Kelly notices Ash staring -- Paco by his side. The very picture of like-minded perverts.

KELLY
(under her breath)
Fucking animals.

BACK TO ASH & PACO

ASH
Who knows, maybe she's a racist.
(noticing)
You're wearing my vest.

PACO
Oh. Sorry.

They swap. Which is how we learn Ash is the Trainee.

INT. TED'S CLUB SUPERSTORE - AISLE - DAY

Ash and Paco push carts full of "RESTOCK" item.

PACO
I can't believe Kelly might be a racist. She seems so cool.

ASH
Just like everyone else working at Ted's Club, right? Guess again. There's a reason they've got the two of us working in the stock room. It's to keep us out of sight. Hidden.

PACO
But you're white?

ASH
A white man with a gamey hand. My disability makes people uncomfortable. Like your heritage.

PACO
You really think?

ASH
I wish the world was different, Paco. I really do. But not everyone is as open minded as me. It's probably because I grew up in a different time. When Latino voices first opened the world's eyes to our brown brother's daily struggles.
(then)
(MORE)

ASH (CONT'D)
Ever heard Cheech and Chong's *Big Bambu* album? He-sterical.

The store MUSAC SWELLS and begins to DISTORT. Like an album playing in reverse. Ash takes notice.

ASH'S POV -- All the shoppers halt their carts in unison and slowly turn their heads to him. Eerily stare.

PACO (O.S.)
You coming?

Ash snaps out of his daze. Paco holds the stockroom door open. Ash looks back to the shoppers. All appears normal.

INT. TED'S CLUB SUPERSTORE - WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ash and Paco roll their carts into the storage area.

PACO
So you think I should give up chasing after Kelly?

ASH
No. But I think you need a workable strategy. You're a good boss, Paco. One of the best I've ever had. You've been really great about working around my nap schedule. That's why I'm prepared to share my foolproof method for landing ladies.

PACO
(skeptical)
A foolproof method.

ASH
Yep. You see, I've learned to turn a negative -- in this case my wooden hand -- into a positive. I stopped thinking of my disability as a liability. And instead, I turned it into my calling card.

PACO
Calling card.

ASH
Yeah. Just like your Mexican heritage.

PACO
I'm from San Salvador.

ASH
Same dif'. Point is, you are unique. Lead with that. Let your Latin roots be *your* calling card. What can you tell me about growing up in San Salvador?

PACO
Not much. I left when I was seven.

ASH
Think hard.

PACO
I remember my grandfather complaining about the death squads.

Ash doesn't like where this conversation is headed.

ASH
How about I just teach you a few choice pick up lines instead?

PACO
I dunno, Ash, pick up lines are pretty lame.

ASH
Lame or not, they work -- when the timing is right. Here's the secret. You never want to use a pick up line in a bar. Better to use one outside a car wash or the parking lot of a weight-loss center. You know, when a girl's defense shields are down.

PACO
I guess that makes sense.

ASH
Trust me, when it comes to pick up lines, you gotta embrace the element of surprise.

INT. TED'S CLUB SUPERSTORE - WASHROOMS - DAY

Paco stands at the door of the EMPLOYEE WASHROOM. Kelly exits the bathroom, nearly collides with Paco.

KELLY
Sorry.

PACO
It's all good.
(noticing)
Say, you've got something on your face.

Paco rubs his thumb against her cheek.

PACO (CONT'D)
Oh, sorry. I guess beautiful doesn't rub off.

Paco forces his most charming smile.

KELLY
Touch me again and I will kick your nuts into your throat.

PACO
Fair warning.

Kelly pushes past. Off Paco, more scared than disappointed.

INT. FBI SPECIAL OPERATIONS HQ - DAY

We are inside a well staffed, high tech command center. FBI Special Operations Headquarters. An electronic WALL MAP displays "All Identified Outbreak Locations."

Agent Fisher works on her laptop. Boggs enters.

BOGGS
You wanted to see me?

FISHER
I may have found something.

Fisher pulls up satellite images of the cabin in the forest.

FISHER (CONT'D)
As you know, there was nothing inside the cabin to indicate a trigger for the outbreak. But when I widened my search...

Fisher expands the image.

FISHER (CONT'D)
I found three trailer parks within a short drive.

BOGGS
What's the significance?

FISHER
That means seven of the last eight outbreaks have occurred in or near a trailer or RV park.

BOGGS
(getting it)
You think Patient Zero owns an RV.

FISHER
Or is towing a trailer.

BOGGS
Spreading this plague knowingly?

FISHER
Yes, sir.

BOGGS
A bio terrorist.

FISHER
Or simple nut-job. I'd like to go back and check out all three trailer parks.

BOGGS
Fine. But my guess is he's already on the move.

FISHER
Let's hope not. There are thousands of RV parks spread out across the country. He could be headed to anyone of them.

Boggs and Fisher turn to face the electronic wall map.

BOGGS
All killers operate with a methodology, Agent Fisher. Ours will be no exception. We just have to identify his patterns...

MATCH TRANSITION TO:

Another MAP OF AMERICA. This one showing the central U.S. locations of Ted's Club Superstores. The "outbreaks" and Ted's Club locations present a perfect match.

INT. TED'S CLUB SUPERSTORE - WAREHOUSE - DAY

PAN off the map to find Ash stocking shelves. He off-loads boxes of toy TROLL DOLLS and stacks them. The LIGHTS FLICKER, go OFF. He's plunged into darkness.

ASH
(calling out)
Hey! Lights on! Man at work here!

The lights remain off. Ash grumbles. Begins to feel his way through the dark, searching for a light switch, when --

He hears a WHISPERING VOICE in the darkness.

WHISPERING VOICE
Ash... Ash...

Ash realizes the whispering appears to be coming from one of the hundreds of boxed dolls that surround him.

WHISPERING VOICE (CONT'D)
We have returned...

Ash studies the dolls suspiciously, but as he turns away, CAMERA rack focuses to a foreground doll. It blinks.

Ash catches something out the corner of his eye, and spins back to the doll. He's not sure which one of them moved.

DOLL POV -- FISH-EYE LENS -- Ash moves his big head close, scrutinizing the little faces.

ASH
All right. Which one of you little girls is the naughty one?

He sees that one of the doll boxes is empty.

DOLL (O.S.)
It is time! We come for you!

Ash turns in time to see --

A DOLL spring from a high shelf. It lands on his face. Clamps on like a ten-inch pitbull, kicking like hell.

ASH
Oh! Oh! Oh!

DOLL
Bow down, Ash Hollllll...

Ash manages to rip the doll from his face.

ASH
The name is Ash Holt.

Ash hurls the doll to the ground. It's plastic head CRACKS open on impact -- dislodging an EYEBALL.

The doll SCREAMS in pain!

ASH (CONT'D)
(mocking)
Oh, you poor 'ting!

Ash tries to stomp on the doll, but the little sucker's too quick -- and manages to scampers up and inside his pant leg.

ASH (CONT'D)
Oh God! No! Get outta there!

Ash thrusts his hand down his pants, shaking his leg like a madman. Dancing on his tiptoes.

ASH (CONT'D)
That's my private area!

Ash gets a hold of the doll. Yanks him out. Smashes it repeatedly against the wall. CRACK-SMASH-CRUNCH!

DOLL
You will not prevail! You must accept your fate! Today you die!

ASH
Those are bold words, coming from a one-eyed chew toy.

A NOISE behind Ash. He turns. His eyes go wide. REVEAL --

All the remaining boxed dolls have spilled from the shelves. One by one the DOLLS SCURRY from their boxes, linking arms and legs. A hive, quickly forming a singular eight-foot-tall, multi-armed SPIDER-LIKE CREATURE.

ASH (CONT'D)
Ah hell...

Ash lets the doll slip from his grasp. It runs to join the others -- leaps and grabs on next to another doll, both hanging from the creature's crotch.

DOLL
Suck on these!!!

The DOLL CREATURE seizes Ash. Lifts him in the air. Hurls him against the wall. He crashes to the floor in a heap.

The Doll Creature lifts FOUR MACHETES from the shelves, advances, SLICING the air like the blades of a blender.

Ash covers, all hope lost, when --

KER-CRASH!!! A REFRIGERATOR lands on top of the Creature. The plastic dolls shatter into a million pieces. Destroyed. Ash puzzles. REVEAL Paco operating a forklift.

PACO
What. The. Fuck. Was. That?!

EXT. TED'S CLUB SUPERSTORE - LOADING DOCK - MOMENTS LATER

Ash and Paco sit on crates. Both rattled.

ASH
Do you believe in the existence of Evil, Paco? A force of nature capable of giving rise to all things wicked and harmful?

PACO
When I was a kid my grandfather spoke of the Devil. Said the Devil liked to hide in the shadows, watching -- always watching -- preparing to steal the souls of naughty little boys.

ASH
Your grandfather taught you well.

PACO
I see that now. Although I did wet the bed 'till I was thirteen.

ASH
Paco, it's time I told you the real story of how I lost my hand.

PACO
You mean it wasn't bitten off by a circus gator?

ASH
No. That was a lie. One of the countless lies I've told over the years. Well, the lies stop now.
(confession time)
Truth is, I cut off my own hand.

CAMERA ROTATES around our duo as Ash recounts his tale. Our background displaying FLASHBACK IMAGES from EVIL DEAD II.

ASH (CONT'D)
It happened years ago. When I was about your age. I had driven my girlfriend to a cabin for a weekend getaway, when we found the book.

PACO
What book?

ASH
Necronomicon ex Mortis. The Book of the Dead.

A YOUNG ASH and LINDA read from the Book of the Dead.

ASH (CONT'D)
We read the passages out loud. It awoke something in the woods. Something dark... evil.

An EVIL FORCE swoops through the dark woods. It comes upon the cabin. Takes over Linda. She turns, eyes bone white.

ASH (CONT'D)
It took over Linda first.

Possessed Linda lunges at Young Ash.

ASH (CONT'D)
She attacked me. And even though I was crazy about her I had no choice but to defend myself.

Young Ash beheads Linda with a shovel. Her head re-animates. Bites young Ash's hand. He furiously battles Linda's disembodied head. Ash's hand becomes possessed by the Evil.

ASH (CONT'D)
It got into my hand and it went bad. So I loped it off at the wrist.

Young Ash cuts off his possessed hand with a chain saw.

The FLASHBACKS fade out.

ASH (CONT'D)
It was the only way to keep it from taking me over. Turning me into one of them.

PACO
And now after all these years the evil has returned.

ASH
Not exactly... It's been back every year since. Somehow it always manages to find me again. And when it does, I hitch my trailer and hit the road -- in search of the next Ted's Club.

PACO
Why Ted's Club?

ASH
Because there's one in every town and I can always count on 'em having job openings. What with the lousy pay and lack of benefits.

PACO
So I guess this means you're pulling up stakes.

ASH
Left no other option.

PACO
Couldn't you stay? Make a stand?

ASH
And embrace a culture of conflict? No. I'm making the more difficult choice. I'm turning the other cheek.
(then)
Listen. Before I go. I need you to do me a big favor.

EXT. TED'S CLUB SUPERSTORE - LOADING DOCK - DAY

Ash is on his knees. His wooden hand held on a block of cement. Paco holds a sledgehammer overhead.

PACO
Ready?

ASH
Ready.

Paco brings down the hammer. Ash's wooden hand SHATTERS.

INT. TED'S CLUB SUPERSTORE - MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Ash and Paco sit across from BRIDGET, late 30s, the store manager. Bridget would be considered pretty if it weren't for the unmistakable hint of crazy in her eyes.

Ash holds his damaged hand for Bridget's inspection.

BRIDGET
You want to file for disability?

ASH
As you can see, my hand is destroyed. Crushed by a falling refrigerator.

BRIDGET
It's a wooden hand.

ASH
Replacement hand. Try and imagine how difficult it's been for me to loose it all over again.

BRIDGET
And you witnessed this?

PACO
(a bad liar)
Yes. Yes I did.

Ash places a note in front of Bridget.

ASH
I find myself between banks. So it would be helpful if you could have my disability checks wired to this Western Union account.

BRIDGET
Paco, could you excuse us a moment?

Paco lets himself out. Closes the door behind him.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
I'm onto you, Ash. Working the system. Playing all the angles.

ASH
Excuse me?

BRIDGET
Don’t play dumb. I see you for who you are: A lazy man. A parasite. And a blow hard.

Bridget drags her fingers through Ash’s hair. Smells them.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
You haven’t returned my call for days. Are you trying to send a message?

ASH
Uh... No message. Just super busy.

BRIDGET
Still should of called.

ASH
I’m confused. Is this about us doing it at the holiday party? Because I thought we both agreed that was a mistake.

BRIDGET
It was. A dirty, dirty mistake.

Bridget sits on the edge of her desk, crosses her legs seductively. Ash finds it slightly unnerving.

BRIDGET (CONT’D)
I don’t know what it is about you, Ash. Somehow you’ve gotten under my skin. Awaken my baby maker.

ASH
Baby maker?

BRIDGET
My clock’s ticking. I want you to punch that clock, Ash. I want you to punch it hard.

ASH
I’m not really husband material.

BRIDGET
I don’t want a husband. I want a man to get me pregnant, then raise my baby. You see, nothing’s getting in the way of my career. Store manager is just a stepping stone to corporate HQ. I’ll be running this company one day.
(MORE)

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
Where as you don't have a career. And never will. You can stay home. Tend to our baby 24/7.

ASH
I gotta be honest. I'm feeling a little pressured.

BRIDGET
Good. Because I'm not going to sign the disability release. Not without a little quid pro quo.

ASH
What's your time line for needing an answer?

BRIDGET
Tonight. I'm ovulating.

ASH
(genuine)
You can do much better than a man like me, Bridget.

BRIDGET
I know. But you'll be much easier to control.

ASH
(after consideration)
I know a great little bar off of I-80. Let's plan on meeting there for drinks after work. Get this party started!

BRIDGET
Good. You won't regret this, Ash. Unless of course you do something stupid like stand me up.

ASH
(a forced laugh)
Even I'm not that stupid.

SMASH CUT TO:

A GLOVE COMPARTMENT

It pops open. We see it's stuffed with REPLACEMENT HANDS. Ash grabs one. Locks it into place. We are --

EXT. TED'S CLUB LOADING DOCK - DAY

Ash moves like a man on fire, hurriedly stuffing the trunk of his car with Ted's Club food, bags of socks, tee-shirts, etc. He slams the trunk shut. Hops behind the wheel.

Ash hits the gas: VA-ROOOM! The Delta lurches forward -- nearly SMASHING INTO --

Paco, who has appeared out of nowhere. Paco opens the passenger door, hops in.

ASH
Look, Paco. I don't really have time for formal goodbyes. Just know I'll miss you most of all.

PACO
Did you make other friends?

ASH
(thinks hard)
Come to think of it...

PACO
Take me with you, Ash.

ASH
What? No. Life on the road is no life. This is where you belong.

PACO
You don't understand. I have to go. Now. Bridget's launched a storewide investigation. Someone's been stealing from the front registers.

ASH
(leading)
Someone?

PACO
It wasn't me.

ASH
Paco...

PACO
It wasn't!

ASH
Relax, Amigo, I'm not judging.

Ash nods his head to the back seat. We sees Ash has stuffed the back seat with more stolen goods. Toilet paper. Flat screen TV. Tubs of Red Vines.

PACO
(firm)
I didn't steal anything.

ASH
Then why run?

PACO
You're not the only one with secrets, Ash.
(off his look)
My name isn't Paco. It's Oscar. Oscar DeLaMora. Paco's the name of the guy I bought a social security number off of. I'm living a lie, Ash. I'm not an American citizen. I'm illegal. My mother paid a Coyote to smuggle me into the country when I was seven. The plan was that I would live with my uncle. But I waited at the train station in El Paso for a whole week. He never showed. Some church people finally took me in and I bounced around in foster care 'till I was fifteen. I've been on my own ever since.

ASH
And you're trusting me with this secret.

PACO
I'd think you of all people would understand what if feels like having to hide in plain sight. Living like a criminal. In constant fear of discovery.
(pleading)
I don't have a car. Or license. I need you to take me with you.

ASH
I don't know. I've been a loner so long it's hard to think about sharing my life with someone else.

PACO
I own a cell phone.

ASH
(warming)
That would come in handy.

INT. ASH'S DELTA - TRAVELING - DAY

Ash drives. Paco rides shotgun. They speed through the Ted's Club parking lot, past Kelly gathering carts.

Paco watches her reflection in the side mirror. His gaze unwavering. Heart breaking a little. Ash notices: poor kid. He sorts through his cassette, pops one in -- CRANKS it.

CHEAP TRICK (V.O.)
MOMMY'S ALRIGHT, DADDY'S ALRIGHT/
THEY JUST SEE A LITTLE WEIRD
SURRENDER/ SURRENDER, BUT DON'T
GIVE YOURSELF AWAY, AY, AY, AY

EXT. ASH'S TRAILER - DUSK

Mrs. Johnson ambles over to Ash's trailer lugging a five gallon bucket and drainage hose. She gets down on her hands and knees preparing to drain Ash's waste water tank.

NEW ANGLE -- UNDERNEATH THE TRAILER

Mrs. Johnson is being watched. Vines writhing in the dark.

BACK TO SCENE

Mrs. Johnson sets the drainage hose on the ground, pulls on her rubber gloves. When she reaches for the hose she discovers it missing. Huh? She leans low, peering under the trailer, sees the hose has rolled just out of reach.

MRS. JOHNSON
Dear lord, why is it never easy?

Mrs. Johnson lays on the ground, sticking her arm under the trailer, feeling for the hose, reaching deeper, when--

MRS. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Ow!!!

She's been grabbed. She struggles.

MRS. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
What?! Help! Help!

In one VIOLENT MOTION Mrs. Johnson is dragged under the trailer. Legs flailing. Her SCREAMS quickly snuffed out. Dead silence. The end of Mrs. Johnson.

EXT. HIGHWAY - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Agent Fisher drives. On the phone.

FISHER
I've checked out two of our three trailer parks. No sign of Zero.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. FBI SPECIAL TASK FORCE - SAME

Boggs on the other end of the line.

BOGGS
Let's hope third time's a charm. I don't want you going in alone. I'll contact local -- get you some back up.

FISHER
(fuck that)
I put a bullet in my partner. You don't think I'm capable of putting one in Zero?

BOGGS
I'd prefer him alive.

FISHER
Who's to say he isn't already dead.

This give Boggs pause.

BOGGS
Do what you have to do.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Ash backs the Delta into position to hitch to the trailer. Paco stand outside, offering directions.

PACO
Back... more... more... good.

Ash climbs out, joins Paco -- now half way to securing the hitch. Ash points to a couple cables hanging from the trunk.

ASH
Don't forget to wire up the tail lights. Poke your head under the trailer you should see two jacks.

PACO
Gotcha.

He sticks his head under the trailer. Into the pitch black. Impossible to see anything. He pops on his phone flashlight to discover he's face to face with -- A SNARLING CREATURE! Mrs. Johnson, turned Deadite.

Paco SCREAMS and falls backward, landing at Ash's feet. Mrs. Johnson squirms out from under the trailer, leaps on Paco. He struggles to ward off her bites, when--

Ash grabs Mrs. Johnson by the hair, snapping her head back. She turns her rage toward him. Bears her teeth, mouth agape.

Ash JAMS his wooden hand inside her mouth! He lifts her off of Paco and PUNCH-RAMS her head against the trailer! SMASH-SPLAT! The force of impact drives Ash's wooden hand into her brain. She hangs on Ash's fist, lifeless. Job done. He detaches his hand. She drops.

ASH
You okay? You bit?

PACO
(in shock)
No and no.

Ash becomes aware of movement all around him. A half dozen trailer park RESIDENTS, all turned Deadite, closing in.

ASH
Let's boogie.

Ash drags Paco inside his trailer.

INT. ASH'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Ash and Paco leap inside. Deadites BANG and SCRATCH at the door. A Deadite arm CRASHES through a window.

PACO
What are those things?!

ASH
Deadites.

Ash pulls his SHOTGUN from the wall. Checks the chamber.

PACO
But what are they?!

ASH
Possessed people, turned evil. Dead, but still alive. With a taste for human flesh. You must be in shock. I distinctly remember having this conversation!

Ash moves to a tarp draped chest. The chalk outline of a chainsaw sketched on it. He pulls back the tarp, to reveal his CHAINSAW HAND, lovingly preserved.

PACO
I thought you spent the last thirty years being hunted by evil dolls! Not man-sized flesh-eaters!

ASH
Relax, Hombre. This isn't my first dance with the dead.

Ash SNAPS the chainsaw onto his wrist and with a TWIST, locks it in place -- steps to the door. Shotgun in one hand, chainsaw the other. He FIRES up the chainsaw with his teeth.

ASH (CONT'D)
We go on three.

PACO
Wait! You're double armed. At least give me the gun.

ASH
No-can-do. The boomstick and saw are my one-two punch.
(looking around)
Grab a frying pan. Three.

Ash swings around and kicks open the door, leaving Paco no choice but to arm himself with a pan.

EXT. ASH'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Ash steps outside, Paco ducked close behind.

Two DEADITES rush forward. BLAMITY-BLAM! Ash shoots from the hip. They drop. A THIRD Deadite charges. Ash spins and deftly saws its HEAD clean off! Paco holds the frying pan up to shield himself from BLOOD and BRAIN SPLATTER.

SLOW MOTION ACTION

Despite the years Ash still has moves. He CARVES and BLASTS his way through Deadites -- culminating with a Deadite leaping from the top of the trailer. Ash raising his chainsaw hand in time to catch it mid-flight -- severing the DEADITE IN TWO with a flick of the wrist!

A moment of calm. Paco looks out from behind the frying pan. No more Deadites. He turns to Ash: A vision. Shirt torn open. Chainsaw one hand. Shotgun smoking in the other. A full blown badass. Poster art pose. Then --

ASH
ARRRGH!

Ash grabs his side. Doubles over in pain.

PACO
What's wrong? Were you bit?

ASH
No... Just a cramp.
(wheezing)
Gotta catch my breath...

PACO
We should get outta here. There may be more of them.

ASH
Hang on.... hang on... The only surefire way to finish off a Deadite is to chop off its head. What we have here is a teachable moment. Observe.

Ash leans over Mrs. Johnson. Lowers his saw blade. Hears a SCREAM! Ash freezes. Did that come out of the old gal?

KELLY (O.C.)
Ohmygod! What are you doing?!

Ash turns to see KELLY has arrive home from work.

ASH
(forced casual)
Oh. Hey. Kelly. Your shift over already?

KELLY
Stay back! I'm calling the police!

ASH
No-no-no-no-no! This really isn't a police matter.

KELLY
How can you even say that?! You murdered all these people!

ASH
Paco. Help her understand.

Kelly's surprised to discover Paco has snuck up behind her.

PACO
This has nothing to do with your earlier rejection.

CLANG! Paco knocks Kelly out with his frying pan.

INT. ASH'S DELTA - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Ash and Paco on the road. Paco clearly in shock. Ash spies something off the highway which suddenly makes him nervous. He slumps down low in his seat, so as not to be seen.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Ash motors past the ROADSIDE BAR he visited the night before.

INT. ROADSIDE BAR - NIGHT

Bridget sits alone at the bar. She double checks her watch, notices Lucy eyeing her from down the bar.

BRIDGET
What are you looking at?

LUCY
Nothing.

BRIDGET
I'm not drinking alone. If that's what you're thinking. I'm waiting on a man.

LUCY
Whaddaya know? So am I!

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

A FLASHLIGHT TRACES over the pile of slaughtered Deadites Ash left behind. REVEAL, Agent Fisher, alert, gun at the ready, searching for signs of life.

She turns her attention to the vacant spot where Ash's trailer once rested -- notes the strange vine configurations. Roots (once attached to the axel) now ripped apart.

And within one tangle of roots -- something SHINY. Ash's LICENSE PLATE, torn from the trailer. Fisher's lips curl into a grim smile. At long last, she's found a clue.

FISHER
I got you -- you sonofabitch.

INT. ASH'S DELTA - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Ash and Paco head down the road. Paco still rattled.

PACO
I'm freaked out, Ash. I think you should pull over. Drop me off.

ASH
Here?

PACO
Anywhere.

ASH
An illegal Mexican wandering the side of the road in rural Michigan? You are not thinking straight, my friend.

Paco considers this. Silently agrees.

PACO
What about Kelly? What are we going to about Kelly?

ASH
I don't know. We'll figure out something. I wouldn't worry.

PACO
(getting worked up)
How can you not worry? We just battled Evil. And it's been chasing you for thirty years. And it will continue to chase you until it catches you and drags you to hell! And now me with you?!

ASH
Maybe. Maybe not. You want to know my secret to not worrying?

PACO
Not particularly.

ASH
I like to think of life like a flowing river. You could spend all your time trying to avoid the rapids -- by swimming upstream or for shore. Or you could kick back and go with the flow. Ride those white waters with a big ol' smile on your face. Turn every challenge, every hardship, every Deadite attack into the grooviest tubing vacation you've ever had. That, in a nutshell is my guiding philosophy. And it's served me pretty darn well over the years. I mean, I'm still here aren't I? Trust me, everything will work out.

Paco slumps, no less worried.

ASH (CONT'D)
How about we listen to music. You got a favorite band?

PACO
Arcade Fire.

ASH
Not familiar. Mariachi?
(struck with an idea)
Wait. I know the perfect song to kick off this roadtrip!

Ash pulls a cassette from the seat. Pops it in.

NEIL YOUNG (V.O.)
THERE'S COLORS ON THE STREET RED, WHITE AND BLUE/PEOPLE SHUFFLIN' THEIR FEET PEOPLE SLEEPIN' IN THEIR SHOES.

EXT. ASH'S DELTA - NIGHT

Ash and Paco cruise along. Ash bopping to the music. Paco still and miserable. The Delta moves PAST CAMERA. Ash's trailer coming into view. Through the window we discover --

KELLY, very much alive. Gagged and hog-tied on the floor.

NEIL YOUNG (V.O.)
BUT THERE'S A WARNIN' SIGN ON THE ROAD AHEAD/THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE SAYIN' WE'D BE BETTER OFF DEAD

The trailer moves PAST CAMERA -- pulling away from us. The first thing we notice is that the tail lights are out. And then that the rear license plate is missing.

NEIL YOUNG (V.O.)
DON'T FEEL LIKE SATAN BUT I AM TO THEM

And lastly, dangling below -- A white eyed, bony, DEADITE (Mrs. Johnson) clinging tightly to the axel. A hidden stowaway. Evil in tow.

NEIL YOUNG (O.S.)
KEEP ON ROCKIN' IN THE FREE WORLD
KEEP ON ROCKIN' IN THE FREE WORLD

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT