

ADVENTURES OF A COUNTRY VET

PILOT

THE END AND THE BEGINNING

EPISODE 1

Written by

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Based on
"Adventures of a Country Vet" Book Series
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ADVENTURES OF A COUNTRY VET

"Pilot - The End and the Beginning"

TEASER

INT. AT THE VET SCHOOL - DAY

CRAWL - APRIL 1973 Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

A GROUP OF STUDENTS dressed in coveralls, one woman and all the rest men, follow a PROFESSOR down a long hall at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine. They turn into the bovine ward and stop briefly beside a pen containing a massive white Charolais bull. The female student, MARGARET, steps forward, grabs the chart and makes her presentation to the group.

MARGARET

This is day eight of hospitalization for this sixteen month old French import Charolais. He was presented two months after leaving Canadian quarantine at Grosse Ile with severe abdominal pain and reluctance to move. He was diagnosed as having hardware disease - he'd eaten some type of metal by accident. An exploratory lapotomy was performed and a three inch piece of wire and a two inch nail were removed from his reticulum. He has been receiving twenty-five cc's of penicillin twice daily since the surgery and seems to be recovering nicely. His temperature this morning was thirty eight point seven and he's eating well.

The professor nods.

PROFESSOR

Dr. Hayden, what would you say to the man who spent twenty thousand dollars to import this animal into Canada, what prognosis would you give, what recommendations would you give him?

Margaret blushes, uncomfortable at being put on the spot, then answers.

MARGARET

I'd recommend that he keeps the bull quiet until the infection is totally walled off, continue the antibiotics.....

She hesitates, then blurts it out.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

...and find a better source of supplemental iron than wires and nails.

The group laughs, the professor nods and they move on to the admitting area.

A goat with a bandaged front leg is standing calmly next to a twelve year old girl, MARY, who periodically fishes treats from her jacket pocket to pass to her pet.

It's the last rounds of the year for the graduating students at the University of Saskatchewan Veterinary School, and you can see that their attention is very divided. The Professor holds up a pair of scissors.

PROFESSOR

Alright, it's been ten weeks since this goat broke it's right front leg. Her owner, Mary has brought her back in so we can see how her leg has healed. Dr. Perrin, can you tell us how this was treated?

One of the students, DAVE PERRIN, comes forward. He's a tall, gangly man, mid twenties with a shock of dark blonde hair.

DAVE

This is Camillia, a two year old Toggenburg. It appeared that she caught her leg in the feeder at home and ended up with a metacarpal fracture. We debrided a superficial scrape, dressed it with a topical furacin bandage, wrapped it with cotton cast padding, and applied a Mason metasplint to keep it stable. We advised Mary to confine her to a stall for ten weeks with minimal movement and to keep the splint clean and dry.

PROFESSOR

Were radiographs taken?

Dave smiles at Mary.

DAVE

It was a pet goat and the owner wanted to keep the cost to a minimum.

PROFESSOR

Did you send the animal home with antibiotics?

Dave shakes his head.

DAVE

The skin wasn't broken, and I didn't think it was necessary. I sent the owner home with a thermometer and requested that she check the temperature daily for the first week, and to call if there was any change.

PROFESSOR

Good answer. Doctor....you can do the honours of unwrapping the leg.

The Professor hands Dave the scissors and Mary hands him the reluctant goat. Dave tries to position the goat to cut off the bandage and she dances away.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Dr. Sims, can you assist?

CORY, Dave's classmate, comes to the head of the goat and embraces it, pretending he's going to kiss it.

CORY

Goodbye, old girl! Good luck for the rest of your life. How does your end look, Dave?

Dave gives Cory a look, then wields the scissors, cutting away the vet wrap and gently unwrapping her front leg. He pulls off the padding and rubs the leg, flexing the joint slightly before putting the goat's leg on the ground.

DAVE

It looks good. I think she'll be fine.

The Professor checks out the goat, running his hand down her leg and nods.

PROFESSOR

Excellent. You've done a good job on her.

Mary reclaims the goat, waves at Dave and exits tugging Camellia behind her.

The group begins to move off towards the main hallway, when the Professor turns to the students.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Well, lady and gentlemen, this is it - your final rounds. From this day on, you'll be known as Doctors of Veterinary Medicine. I know that it's been a long haul for you and that many of you have overcome a lot of adversity to make it to this day. I'd just like to wish each and every one of you success in the future. If there are two pieces of wisdom I can leave you with - these are things that one of my professors told me many years ago, and it's been the best advice I ever got. "Never let a large animal client know you can use a rope" and "Don't ever turn your back in the barn". I'll see you at convocation.

The Professor walks towards the exit as the students let out a collective cheer.

CORY

So what time are you going to be there?

DAVE

Come on Cory, I told you I've got to pack.

CORY

You're really not even staying till convocation?

DAVE

I can't. I've got to be in Vancouver next week to write B.C.'s bloody board exams.

CORY
Well, at least come to this party
tonight at Doyl's house.

Dave doesn't look convinced.

CORY (CONT'D)
Come on. Look, we're all going to
throw in our last few bucks and buy
a bunch of food - good food - no
more mac and cheese, and some beer.
Spend your last night in
civilization with your friends.
What can it hurt?

DAVE
Good food?

CORY
Excellent food.

DAVE
OK, I'll go.

CORY
Great - and bring beer!

END OF TEASER

ACT 1

INT. AT DOYL'S HOUSE PARTY - EVENING

Dave and Cory enter the kitchen with a load of beer in one hand and trays of meat and cheese in the other. A big "Congratulations" banner, surrounded with balloons, hangs over the door to the living room. They're greeted by Doyl, a fellow student and definitely a cowboy, along with his Great Dane, HARVEY. He hands them a beer each as they walk through the door.

DOYL
Hey, boys, glad you could make it. Harvey, get down. That stuff's not for you. Oh, I guess I should say, "hello doctors". Sounds good, eh?

DAVE
Doctor....

CORY
Doctor....

DOYL
Doctor...

They toast each other with their beer as Doyl's wife TERRY walks over with hands full of chips and dip.

TERRY
Hi, Cory. Hi, Dave. Doyl, put him outside. He's going to get into things.

DOYL
He's fine. See? Harvey, sit.

The dog ignores him, sniffing at Dave's shoes.

DOYL (CONT'D)
Been in the barn again, Dave?

Dave looks guiltily at his shoes.

DAVE
Just took one last walk through. I doubt that I'll ever be back here again.

TERRY
You lived out west, right?

DAVE

(awkwardly)

Yeah, I'm from a little tiny place called Casino. Just a hole in the wall, way up in the mountains.

TERRY

Must be a big change for you, living out here on the prairies.

DAVE

Yeah....uh...should I put these trays of meat and cheese out on the table?

TERRY

I'll take them - we've got tables set up in the living room with the fondue and all the other food. I hope you're all hungry. Doyl? I told you to put that dog outside.

Terry carries the platters through into the living room with Harvey following along behind. Doyl ignores her and gets another beer from the fridge. He's obviously already had one or two.

CORY

Doyl, you goin' to the Stampede again this year?

DOYL

You bet. We won the pony chucks last year, so we'll be pullin' up stakes here and headin' back to the ranch in Okotoks next week to get everything ready.

DAVE

That was quite a demonstration you put on in the college grounds.

CORY

Yeah, it's amazing we didn't all get suspended right then and there. It'll take them years to get rid of the ruts and replace the turf.

Terry comes back in and starts looking through the cupboards.

TERRY

Did you move the napkins?

Doyl hands Terry a bag from the table.

DOYL
Napkins. Check.

Terry pulls a casserole from the oven and puts some topping on it.

TERRY
Did you light the fondue pots?

DOYL
Check. She's been workin' on this for days - told her we should just go to the pub but....

CORY
So you're still going to go ahead with this nutty plan?

DAVE
What's so nutty about it?

CORY
You don't have a place to set up an office, you don't have any clients...how are you planning to live?

DAVE
Something will turn up. It always does.

CORY
Sure.

DAVE
Do you know how I got into vet school? I got turned down. I wasn't going to be able to get in. I was out putting radio collars on bears when they found me and told me someone backed out, and I was accepted. That's why I'm here. Things'll work out. They have to. Cause I can't afford for it not to.

Cory holds up his bottle to Dave. Terry hustles by with the casserole dish, headed for the living room.

CORY
Ok, buddy - here's to you and your future in...what's the name of the town?

DAVE
Creston.

CORY
OK. Here's to you and your career -
maybe - in Creston.

DOYL
To Creston!

DAVE
To Creston!

They clink their bottles together. There are two large BANGS
offscreen and Terry lets out a scream.

TERRY (O.S.)
Oh My GOD! Harvey!

Harvey comes racing into the kitchen, a string of meat and
cheese hanging from his jaws, with Terry in hot pursuit, an
empty tray in her hand. Doyl foolishly laughs.

CORY
Our meat...

DAVE
Our cheese....

Terry has caught Harvey and is dragging him towards the
kitchen door.

TERRY
I TOLD you to put him outside. He's
eaten EVERYTHING!

Doyl is bent over double laughing. Terry throws the dog
through the door and slams it, then turns in rage on Doyl.

TERRY (CONT'D)
You think this is FUNNY? I worked
for HOURS....

She accentuates her anger by flinging a beer bottle at Doyl
with every emphasis. She misses him with the first one - Dave
and Cory dive out of the way.

TERRY (CONT'D)
I spent DAYS.....

Bottle whizzes past Dave and Cory. Doyl is having a great
time, ducking and weaving. Dave and Cory back away, giving
Doyl room to dodge.

DOYL
Honey, I was a rodeo clown - you
can't hit me!

TERRY
I BAKED...

DOYL
Incoming! Yee Ha!

Bottle whizzes past and hits the cupboard, breaks, sending
glass everywhere.

TERRY
I CLEANED...

Bottle whizzes past.

DOYL
Hey baby, that one was close! Oh,
no it wasn't!

TERRY
I DECORATED.....

Bottle whizzes past. Crashes and breaks against the sink.

DOYL
Missed again!

TERRY
You think this is FUNNY! I
SUPPORTED you through school....

A bottle goes by, getting closer, hits the fridge.

DOYL
Aim left, honey!

TERRY
My mother TOLD ME not to marry you!

She hucks another bottle. This one hits him solidly in the
forehead, and he goes down like an ox. There's dead silence.

CORY
Is there a doctor in the house?

EXT. OUTSIDE DAVE'S BASEMENT SUITE.

Cory and Dave are bringing the last of Dave's boxes up to be
stowed in his tiny little VW bug. With much poking and
prodding, they finally fit them in.

DAVE

Well, that's it. I guess I'd better get going.

CORY

So that whole thing with the other vet in Creston fell through? You were going to work with him and maybe take over his practice?

DAVE

Dr. Marling? Yeah, he changed his mind. We talked about it a lot but when push came to shove, he decided to stay on instead. So I'm on my own.

CORY

I still think you should see if they've got another spot open at WSU where I'm going. Interning somewhere's a lot easier than trying to start up your own place.

DAVE

No, I've made up my mind. That's all I've thought about for the past six months. I love the Kootenays, and I can stay in my grandparent's log cabin up in West Creston till I get established.

Dave pulls out a picture and shows it to Cory.

DAVE (CONT'D)

That's my grandma - she was a great cook, did tons of preserves. Her pantry was full of all kinds of canning every fall. I can still taste the canned chicken that she used to make. They've been gone for eight years now.

CORY

Wow. Nice place. Well, good luck, buddy. I'd better get going - are you coming back for the grad?

DAVE

Maybe. I have to get my results from the vet exams out west - if I don't pass them, I don't know what I'll do. I'll try.

Dave shakes hands with Cory, then gives him a quick hug.

DAVE (CONT'D)
I'm going to miss all this. It's
been a good time, hasn't it?

CORY
Oh, yeah. The late night studying,
the papers due....

DAVE
The drinking contests, the long
hours of shuffleboard at the
hotel....

CORY
Yeah. All that. You take care.

DAVE
You too.

CORY
Till we meet again.

Cory salutes as Dave folds himself into the car and revs up the engine. A puff of black smoke comes out the tailpipe, and the gears grind when Dave starts to drive away.

Creedance Clearwater Revival - Up Around The Bend begins playing.

EXT. MONTAGE OF SHOTS AS DAVE IS DRIVING - VARIOUS

A **CARICATURE MAP** appears with Dave's VW putting along the roads, interspersed with cuts to **live action MONTAGE** as:

- Dave drives by a sign that says "leaving Saskatchewan".
- Dave stops to check his map against a road sign - Highway 1.
- Another sign says "entering Alberta".
- Dave stops to change a tire.
- Dave misses a turn and backtracks a few feet, then makes the turn.
- Dave stops while a cow walks across in front of his car.
- A sign says "entering B.C."

THE MUSIC STOPS ABRUPTLY when Dave gets out to check a magnificent view of the Rogers Pass, then RESUMES when he gets back into the car and drives away.

- Dave stops for coffee and gas.
- Dave checks the car oil.
- He stops to check a signpost against his map.
- Dave drives through Vancouver.

THE MUSIC STOPS ABRUPTLY as Dave sits in a classroom with a bunch of other fledgling vets, writing his exam, chewing on his pen, then RESUMES when he gets into his car and drives away.

- Dave drives past a sign that says "Casino".
- He hugs his mom and shakes hands with his dad at their home.
- He pets his horses, selects two kittens, puts them in a carrier in the car. His dad helps him finish tying four kitchen chairs onto the roof of the car, then he waves goodbye to his parents.
- As Dave pulls up in front of the West Kootenay Animal Clinic the MUSIC FADES.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WEST KOOTENAY ANIMAL CLINIC IN TRAIL - DAY

Dave climbs out of the car and walks to the door of the clinic.

INT. INSIDE THE WEST KOOTENAY ANIMAL CLINIC - DAY

Dave enters and walks over to the desk, where the doctor's wife/assistant, CATHY is sitting. She looks up, throws down her pen, gets up and gives Dave a hug.

CATHY

Look who's here! Hi Dave - so you finally finished!

DAVE

Yeah, it's been a hard grind, but at least the book part of it is over.

As he's speaking, DR. MORGANTHALER, a very quiet, mild mannered man, comes into the office.

DR. MORGANTHALER

Hi there, Dave - congratulations on qualifying! Have you made up your mind what you're going to do? Hugh and I could use you between here and Nelson, if you want a job.

DAVE

Actually I'm still going to set up a practice over in Creston.

DR. MORGANTHALER

Still haven't given up on Creston yet?

(In a flat tone of voice)
Keith Marling'll like that..

DAVE

I don't imagine he'll be too fond of the idea, but there's a lot of large animal work over there that needs to be done, and the dairymen are anxious to get me over there.

DR. MORGANTHALER

(nods)

I know. Hugh and I have been going over to help them out from time to time, but it'll likely be a pretty slow start if you're depending on them to make a living...

DAVE

Well, I've made up my mind to give it a try. I'm starting out with nothing, so I was wondering if you could give me the addresses of some drug companies, and things like that. I need to find out who to talk to, names of salesmen, so that I can get some supplies on hand.

DR. MORGANTHALER

Have you got anything lined up?

DAVE

(shakes his head)
Nope.

Dr. Morgenthaler smiles.

DR. MORGANTHALER

Sure, we can give you some phone numbers and catalogues of what you need. Cath, can you round up a few of those for him?

Cathy pulls out a few catalogues for Dave, and a couple of business cards.

CATHY

You should be able to find everything you need in these.

DAVE

Thanks. This will help a lot.

Dave walks toward the door. Dr. Morgenthaler looks at his wife. She smiles. His face gets more serious.

DR. MORGANTHALER

Wait a minute. We can remember what it was like when we were starting up here, and Keith stuck it to me every chance he could get. We'll give you a bit of a stake to get started - you can pay us back when you get a chance.

DAVE

You'd do that?

CATHY

Why not. Come on in back - let's make you up a care package.

INT. THE BACK ROOM OF WEST KOOTENAY CLINIC - DAY

DR. MORGANTHALER

You'll need six or eight grams of Biotol, maybe a couple of the five gram size for horses....

CATHY

What about some atropine and Demerol? And probably some Atravet....

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL - UP AROUND THE BEND RESUMES

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WEST KOOTENAY ANIMAL CLINIC - DAY

Dave leaves West Kootenay Animal Clinic and waves goodbye.

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - DAY

The back seat is stacked to the ceiling with boxes, and the front seat and floor are stacked up too.

EXT. MONTAGE OF SHOTS - VARIOUS

- Dave urges the car up a hill -

- He stops at the top of the Salmo Creston Pass as a chair falls off the car's roof. As Dave goes to retrieve it, a transport truck runs it over.

- Dave stops as a deer walks across the road in front of him, then a fawn follows.

- The Creston Valley spreads out below Dave's car as he emerges from the mountains.

He pulls off and looks at the signpost - one sign says "West Creston". The other says "Creston". He hesitates, then heads off towards Creston. As he turns south onto Highway 21, the MUSIC FADES.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE KOOTENAY ANIMAL CLINIC - DAY

He turns off at a building that says "Kootenay Veterinary Clinic". He pauses, looking back at the road, then pulls into the Kootenay Clinic parking lot and gets out of the car.

INT. INSIDE THE MARLING CLINIC MAIN OFFICE - DAY

Dave opens the door and walks inside. ANNE, the blonde receptionist looks up from her desk.

ANNE

Hi, Dave - are you passing through Creston on your way home?

DAVE

Sort of. Is Keith around?

ANNE

Yeah, just a second. Keith?

She walks to the door of the examining room and knocks on the door. It opens, and KEITH MARLING emerges wiping his hands - he's a stocky middle aged man with a shock of white in the front of his dark hair. He sees Dave and walks towards him.

KEITH

So you've come back, have you?
School all done?

DAVE

Yes, I'm finished. I just wanted
you to know that I've decided to
set up a practice here.

KEITH

Here?

DAVE

Uh, yeah, here in Creston.

KEITH

Oh. You have, have you....well,
good luck to you.....

DAVE

Thanks. I just thought I'd drop by
and let you know.

KEITH

Ok. Now I know.

DAVE

Ok. Well, I'd better get going.

Dave turns and leaves the clinic. After the door closes,
Keith turns to Anne.

KEITH

This should be interesting....

EXT. IN THE MARLING PARKING LOT - DAY

Dave gets into the car and starts it up, then puts his head
down against the steering wheel for a moment. He accidentally
hits the horn with his head, BEEEEEP, and jerks back up,
glancing back at the clinic window. He reverses and leaves
the parking lot, heading for the West Creston ferry.

ANIMATED MAP - CAR GOES FROM CLINIC TO FERRY LANDING.

EXT. AT THE WEST CRESTON FERRY LANDING - DAY

A gravel road ends at the ferry landing. An old ferry, capable of holding three cars, is sitting on the far side of the river, on the end of a cable tether that pulls it back and forth across the river. Dave parks his car and waits as the ferryman starts up his engine and wends his way across towards Dave's shore. The ferry hits the bank and Dave gingerly drives his car down onto the ferry deck. A grizzled older man, BILL BORDON, pulls up the ferry landing gate before hitting the controls to start the winch that pulls the ferry across the river. He saunters back over to the door of Dave's car and looks down at him sourly.

BILL
You the new vet?

DAVE
Yeah, I am. How did you....

BILL
Huh. Your cousin, Bea MacKay. Came over an hour back.

DAVE
Oh.

BILL
You need anything for that old cabin, call me. Got lots of stuff. Lots of sinks.

DAVE
Sinks? Well, uh, thanks.

Bill realizes they're nearing the far bank and he returns to the controls of the ferry.

Dave starts his car as the ferry hits gravel and Bill drops the landing ramp.

Dave drives off the ferry and down the gravel road with a "West Creston" sign off to the side.

MUSIC - ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH - JOHN DENVER starts playing in the background

ANIMATED MAP - CAR GOES FROM FERRY LANDING TO WEST CRESTON.

EXT. ON THE WEST CRESTON SWITCHBACKS - DAY

Dave is driving up the sharp switchbacks, going higher and higher. The countryside is very rugged, with thick underbrush and towering cedar and fir trees crowding the road. The washboards on the road are shaking the car at every turn.

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - DAY

Dave is being shaken silly as he drives over the washboards. He gears down.

EXT. AT THE CABIN DRIVEWAY - DAY

Dave's car rolls to a stop at the corner, then turns right, going to the first driveway on the right, obscured by brush and overgrown tree branches. The car turns in, pushing its way through the foliage. Dave gets out and turns to look at the view down below. The whole Creston valley stretches out in a patchwork quilt of crops, with the Kootenay River meandering across in wide loops. He smiles, stretches his back then turns from the view and walks through the bushes to the front of the cabin.

The MUSIC STOPS abruptly.

He stops in shock, then pulls the picture of his grandparents' cabin out of his pocket and looks at it in dismay, comparing the well kept building in the photo with the hovel in front of him. The door is hanging off the hinges. The floorboards of the porch have got holes in them, which he dodges as he walks in disbelief towards the dark doorway. The weathered and torn screen door opens with a screech as Dave walks inside. He reaches out to try the light switch - no electricity. Dave enters, and ducks as half a dozen bats, disturbed by his entrance, fly out over his head just as the screen door slams behind him. He pries open the shutters on the windows and looks around. The place has been demolished inside, with holes in the drywall. Dave picks up the phone wires and looks at them where they're hanging from a hole at shoulder height on the wall. He walks to where the cupboards and counter should be. Nothing there.

DAVE

No sink.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

EXT. OUTSIDE GRANDPARENT'S CABIN - LATE AFTERNOON

Dave is unloading boxes and suitcases from the car, setting them on the front porch. The kittens are playing around his feet. A battered old blue pickup truck pulls in behind his car and BEA MACKAY emerges. She's middle aged, a little plump - a typical farmer's wife.

BEA
I see you made it.

DAVE
Hi, Bea. Yeah. Kind of.

BEA
Sorry I didn't get a chance to prepare you before you saw the old place...

DAVE
What happened?

BEA
Renters, mostly. Your aunt didn't want it standin' empty so she rented it to some hippie types a year ago - not too many people want to come all the way out here, y'know. Probably growin' marijuana in the woods out back, if you ask me. They took everything they could cart off when they left, but they did leave behind a couple of bantie roosters.

Bea nods her head towards a tree beside the house, where a couple of colourful roosters are sitting on a branch.

BEA (CONT'D)
Kinda hated to do anything with them - they made it through the winter pretty much on their own. Don't know how they didn't get eaten by somethin'. I'd walk over every couple of days from our place and throw them a little feed.

DAVE
Well, I guess it's gonna be an uphill battle for them and me. I'm already tired....

BEA

I've got a bottle of cold milk in the truck. Hang on.

Bea walks back to the truck and pulls out some glasses and a bottle full of milk, bringing it back to the porch. She pours Dave a glass of milk.

BEA (CONT'D)

I was gonna bring some milk over for you. You look like you're about to fall over. Come and sit down. At least you've got a million dollar view.

Dave accepts the glass and sits down beside Bea on the edge of the porch, facing toward the valley down below. He takes a long pull on the glass of milk, getting cream on his upper lip. The kittens are tired from playing, and they climb up in Dave and Bea's laps to settle in for a nap.

DAVE

There's nothing quite as good as milk from your Jersey cow.

Bea laughs and shakes her head.

BEA

..till we start listenin' to those darned doctors. They keep harpin' at Fred and me about our cholesterol.

Dave smiles, wipes the cream off his lip and looks back down into the valley as he strokes the kitten.

DAVE

Do you ever get tired of it?

BEA

What?

DAVE

This view. People would die for this view.

BEA

Nope. Every day it's different, and then there's the different seasons. I'm not sure which one is prettiest. Winters not quite so nice sometimes, especially when you gotta drive down those hills, but it's always changing.

DAVE

I couldn't stay out there anymore.

BEA

On the prairies?

DAVE

It just didn't feel...right. Too open. Too much space. It feels right here. I need the mountains. It's like they're kind of folded in around me.

BEA

Lots of prairie people feel just the opposite. They come here to retire, and can't stand the mountains fencing them in. They need the space.

DAVE

To each their own, I guess. But this is home for me.

BEA

You sure you don't want to bunk across the road with us for a few days, till you get things together over here?

DAVE

Nah. I'd kind of like to sleep here, mice and bats...

BEA

Bats??

DAVE

...bats and all. And I have livestock to attend to.

Dave gestures at the roosters in the tree.

DAVE (CONT'D)

It still feels a bit strange not to see grandpa and grandma here. Every time that screen door slams, it reminds me of them. Remember how much grandpa used to enjoy arguing with dad? If dad said the sky was blue, grandpa'd say it was green. And grandma - remember how she used to spend the whole summer canning?

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

That whole back room was full of jars every fall.

BEA

She was a great cook, for sure. Speaking of that, why don't you come over for dinner tonight? Fred should be in from the field in an hour or so....

DAVE

Now that's an offer I won't turn down!

BEA

Oh, by the way - I told Mildred that you were coming, and Bill down at the ferry found out, so now a ton of people know about the "new vet".

DAVE

New vet - yeah, I still need a place to practice, and drugs and instruments....

BEA

Well, you'd better get your tail in gear. The news is spreading like wildfire. I could hardly get a call through on the party line today. The long and the short of it is, I've got your first job for you tomorrow morning. Jean Melba in West Arrow Creek needs you out there to worm her goats. She's got some fancy purebred ones she brought with her from the coast. You don't need an office for that. Oh, and she mentioned something called sweet william? That's when Clara came on the party line and interrupted.

DAVE

Sweet william. What's that? A flowering plant?

BEA

You've got me. I guess you'll find out tomorrow. Do you like peach pie and ice cream for dessert?

DAVE

You had me at the peach pie. I'll
unpack after dinner.

Dave pulls the old door shut across the cabin. He and Bea
climb into the battered old truck and drive away.

INT. INSIDE THE CABIN - MORNING

Dave's head is under the edge of his sleeping bag when a
ROOSTER CROWS, jerking him awake. He rolls over on the air
mattress, pulling the sleeping bag further over his head as
the ROOSTERS CROW over and over.

DAVE

Damn birds.

He throws back the sleeping bag and starts to crawl out of
his bed.

INT. FRED AND BEA MACKAY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Bea opens the door to Dave.

BEA

Coffee?

DAVE

With Jersey cream?

INT. FRED AND BEA'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Bea and Dave are drinking coffee. Dave spoons some cream out
of a pitcher, and watches in fascination as the spoon stands
straight up in the pitcher when he puts it back.

DAVE

This cream has got to be so rich
it's almost butter. No wonder your
doctor is after you. That's the
only good thing about coffee -
otherwise I have no idea why
anybody drinks it.

BEA

Wait till you get your practice
going - you'll be drinking it ten
times a day just to keep going. You
got everything you need for those
goats this morning?

DAVE

Yep, I think I'm set. Should be a piece of cake, worming a little herd of nanny goats. Wish me luck - this is my first case - the first day of my new career!

ANIMATED MAP - DAVE'S CAR DRIVES TO THE FERRY. PAUSES.

EXT. ON THE WEST CRESTON FERRY - DAY

Dave watches Bill Bordon thoughtfully as he sits in his car waiting for the ferry to get across.

DAVE

You wouldn't have any taps with those sinks, would you?

BILL

Maybe. Taps're extra.

DAVE

Ahhh...

The ferry reaches the far side and Dave drives off.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Taps are extra....

ANIMATED MAP, DAVE'S CAR FOLLOWS THE ROADS TO WEST ARROW CREEK.

EXT. JEAN MELBA'S FARM IN WEST ARROW CREEK - DAY

Dave pulls up beside the house. It's a small log home that has definitely seen better days, with ivy everywhere and the odd shake missing from the roof. As he gets out, JEAN MELBA comes to meet him.

JEAN

Good morning, Doctor Perrin! I'm so glad you could come. You get to meet all of my children this morning. I have eight of them. Six of them are goats, one's a cat, and there goes the other one!

A sheltie trots off around the back of the house. Dave pulls on his coveralls, reaches into the car and pulls out his bucket, syringes, enema tube and wormer.

DAVE

Could I have this about half full
of warm water, Mrs. Melba?

Jean goes into the house. Dave sits down on a rock to wait for the water, turning his face up to the sunshine. He glances at the house, looks at his watch, then knocks on the door.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Mrs. Melba? Did you get the water?

She opens the door.

JEAN

You said you wanted warm water, and
I have to heat it. I don't have
running water here, Doctor.

DAVE

Oh. Well, cold will do then.

Jean comes out of the house with the bucket half full of cold water.

JEAN

It's such a peaceful area, perfect
for the goats, but it's harder than
I thought to live here without hot
water and the house is literally
crawling with mice...

Dave glances back at the house, then follows Jean to the goat pen.

EXT. AT THE GOAT PEN - DAY

Dave looks over the Nubian goats behind the split rail fence. They're healthy specimens with big floppy ears, intelligent eyes, and delicate feminine features. The goats reach eagerly through the fence toward Jean, hoping for treats.

JEAN

This one's Lizzy. She's my
favourite. They have such beautiful
eyes.

DAVE

Unique looking, that's for sure.
Some cultures are superstitious
about goat's eyes.

Dave mixes up the wormer, and he and Jean climb over the fence into the pen. They corner Lizzy, and Dave puts a tube down her nose.

JEAN

Easy, sweetie - you know mom would never hurt you. This nice man is just going to put a tube into your tummy to get rid of all the nasty worms hiding there.

Dave blows into the tube once it's down, puts a syringe of wormer down, then a syringe of water, then blows down the tube and pulls it back up.

DAVE

One down, who's next?

MUSIC UP - SUPERSTITION - STEVIE WONDER - starts.

MONTAGE:

- Dave corners a goat and it gets past him
- Jean pets one of the girls and lets it nibble at her nose
- Dave backs one of the goats into a corner
- closeup of goat's eyes
- All the goats are running in a circle around the people
- Dave grabs another goat and backs her into a corner, holds out his hand for the tube.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AT THE GOAT PEN - LATER

Dave is packing up his things, and he stops to count noses.

MUSIC OUT.

DAVE

I thought you mentioned you had six nannies to worm, Mrs. Melba, but I only see five here.

Jean doesn't like that.

JEAN

I hope you don't mind me telling you, Dr. Perrin, that we goat breeders see it as a sign of ignorance when people talk about "nanny" goats and "billy goats". We prefer to call a female goat a "doe" and a male goat a "buck".

DAVE

Sorry, Mrs. Melba, but didn't you say you had six "does"?

Jean has an inscrutable expression on her face.

JEAN

Oh, no, doctor. I have five does and Sweet William.

DAVE

Sweet William? Bea said you'd mentioned that - isn't it a flower?

JEAN

Not...exactly..a flower....Sweet William is my buck.

DAVE

You have a buck....

JEAN

He's just around the corner...

Dave picks up his bucket and walks beside Jean. He stops and sniffs the air.

DAVE

We must be getting close....

EXT. AT SWEET WILLIAM'S PEN - DAY

Jean and Dave round the corner and there is Sweet William, standing up on the rails of his pen. He is absolutely enormous compared to the does. He sees the people, and goes through his "rutting" routine - peeing on his beard and rubbing it on his body. Dave stops again and is now gulping in air.

JEAN

He's usually a dream to handle when he's not in mating season, but when he gets like this, I don't handle him much, and I certainly wouldn't turn my back on him.

Dave grits his teeth and turns to Jean, thrusting the syringes at her.

DAVE

Hand me the medication as soon as I get the tube in.

Dave climbs through the rails trying desperately not to breathe air near the goat, keeping his head turned away and holding his breath as long as possible before taking the next gulp of air. He backs the goat into the building and grabs him tight around his very muscular neck.

DAVE (CONT'D)

(holding his breath)

OK, Mrs. Melba, give me the tube.

Jean isn't coming in with them - she reaches over the fence to hand Dave the tube - he tries to grab it, but it touches his hand and then hits the ground. He looks at the tube on the ground, and looks back up into the eyes of Sweet William.

MUSIC - I THINK I LOVE YOU - THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY - begins.

Dave looks at the tube, looks back at the goat, and dives for the tube, letting go of the goat's neck for a heartbeat. That's all Sweet William needs.

JEAN

Look out! He's going to mount you!

Sweet William lunges forward over Dave, knocking him flat onto the ground. As Dave gets to his knees, Sweet William mounts him and does the unthinkable, at the same time rubbing his filthy urine filled beard all over Dave's back and hair. Dave reacts, jumping to his feet, knocking the goat over backwards.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Don't hurt him! Maybe we should forget about him for today!

Dave advances on the goat, goat fluids dripping down his back.

DAVE
 Forget about him? I don't think so.
 Just get in here with that bloody
 syringe. The syringe, Mrs. Melba!

Dave holds his hand out to Jean. Sweet William sees his fate in Dave's eyes and backs away into a corner.

MUSIC FADES OUT

EXT. AT DAVE'S CAR ON MELBA FARM - DAY

Dave is climbing out of his overalls, looking at the stains with disgust before he jumbles them up. He sluices the cold water in the bucket over his hands and face, then dumps it on the ground.

JEAN
 You're alright, aren't you Doctor?

DAVE
 Older and wiser, Mrs. Melba. Now I understand where they get the old saying, "hornier than a billy goat"

Jean hands Dave a cheque, looking annoyed.

JEAN
 It's "buck", Doctor Perrin. William is a "buck", NOT a "billy goat". He's a purebred registered "buck".

ANIMATED MAP - DAVE'S CAR LEAVES WEST ARROW CREEK AND DRIVES BACK INTO CRESTON, STOPPING ON CANYON STREET.

EXT. ON THE STREET OF CRESTON - DAY

Dave has a bag of groceries in one hand as he walks down Canyon Street. As he passes Veitch Realty, he stops to look at the listings in the window, daydreaming. As he's standing there, the door opens and GORDON VEITCH exits. He pauses as he sees a possible pigeon standing outside his office.

GORDON
 I see you're looking at some property listings.

DAVE
 Yeah, just looking...

Dave turns to leave. Gordon tags along.

GORDON
So what are you in the market for?
House? Farm?

DAVE
No, sorry, just looking. I just got
here, so it'll be awhile before I
can afford much.

GORDON
Yeah? What do you do?

DAVE
I'm a veterinarian.

Gordon stops on the sidewalk.

GORDON
Ahhhhh...You're the new guy. I'm
Gordon Veitch.

Gordon holds out his hand. Dave shakes.

DAVE
Dave Perrin.

Gordon whips out his card.

GORDON
So where you planning on setting up
your office?

DAVE
I'm staying in my grandparents'
cabin in West Creston. I'll be
operating out of there for now.

GORDON
West Creston? Too far. We'll have
to see what we can find you.
Something cozy, low rent, central.
I've got some thoughts....hey, you
have any dinner plans?

Dave looks down at his sack of groceries. Gordon looks down
too.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Beans? Really? Come on over for
dinner tonight. My wife Ruth does a
great casserole.

Dave looks doubtful.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Come on, we can talk about your new
office over dessert. How about it?

DAVE
OK. If it's not too much trouble.

GORDON
Nah, Ruth will love to meet you.
About six?

Gordon sniffs the air and looks around.

GORDON (CONT'D)
What's that smell? The mill must be
burning something pretty rancid
today.

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

ANIMATED MAP - CAR GOES FROM WEST CRESTON TO CRAWFORD HILL.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE VEITCH HOUSE - EVENING

Dave knocks at the door, a bottle of wine in his other hand. The door's opened by RUTH VEITCH.

RUTH

You must be Dave. Gordon's told me all about you. Come on in! Wine? That's great - what a good brand.

INT. AT THE VEITCH DINNER TABLE - EVENING

Gordon is expounding on a money making scheme, using his fork for emphasis.

GORDON

So if we can raise the capital, and with Dave's input, I think this could be a real money maker. I have just one word for you, Dave. Elk!

DAVE

Elk?

Ruth has come back in from the kitchen with dessert.

RUTH

Not elk again.

GORDON

I tell you, it's a growth industry. They're importing them from Colorado.

DAVE

What on earth do you do with them?

RUTH

Oh, no. Here we go.....

GORDON

Asian medicine! They grind the antlers up for medicine. What do you think, Dave?

DAVE

I think I'd better concentrate on getting an office first. How do you get the antlers off them?

RUTH

Good question! Gordon?

GORDON

That's a detail we have to work out. You could be our consultant. Just think of it - hundreds of elk cantering majestically over the fields...

RUTH

Which fields?

GORDON

Well, we'd have to get some fields....

RUTH

How about some trifle instead?

Ruth hands around big bowls of trifle smothered with whipped cream.

GORDON

Let's have dessert in the living room.

RUTH

I'll bring the coffee.

INT. INSIDE THE VEITCH LIVINGROOM - EVENING

Gordon switches on the TV set.

GORDON

Mind if we watch the news for a few minutes?

Instead of sitting on the couch, Gordon stretches out on the floor like a beached whale, with a huge stuffed pillow under his massive belly, and his bowl of trifle on the floor in front of him.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Join me Dave - I think better this way.

Dave gingerly lays down on the floor beside Gordon with his dessert, another stuffed pillow under his chest.

DAVE
This is pretty comfortable.

Gordon points his spoon at the TV.

GORDON
Now THAT'S a horse...

A thoroughbred is prancing along beside a lead horse on the TV screen.

DAVE
Secretariat. First Triple Crown winner in twenty-five years. Beautiful animal. He set new track records at the Belmont and the Kentucky Derby.

GORDON
Horses are too big though, too hard to handle. Elk, on the other hand....

The PHONE RINGS in the kitchen. Ruth can be heard answering it and talking, then she pops her head into the room.

RUTH
Gordon? Did you tell Deb Anson that Dave was coming for dinner?

GORDON
Might have.
(aside to Dave)
Deb has the hots for you buddy, and she hasn't even met you yet. Man killer. Claws. Rarr.

Ruth enters.

RUTH
Well, she says she's got a dog that's been hit by a car, and she wants Dave to come and see what he can do for it. It's hind leg is cut open.

Gordon sits up.

GORDON

Dog? Deb doesn't have a dog. She got a dog just to meet you? This girl's desperate.

RUTH

Deb wouldn't run over her own dog just to get to know Dave!

GORDON

The hell she wouldn't! This morning when I had coffee with her, she didn't even have a dog! She said she was gonna go out and get one so she could snare that long, tall vet. OK, we'll go.

RUTH

We? Since when did you become a vet assistant?

Gordon takes the last bite of his dessert and puts his bowl on the coffee table.

GORDON

Since today, my dear wife. Come on, Dave, I'll be your chaperone. We're off to Hiway Cabins!

RUTH

You may as well go, you've got poor Dave scared spitless now.

Dave hastily finishes his dessert and follows Gordon toward the door.

DAVE

Thanks for dinner, Ruth, it was wonderful!

GORDON

Come on, Daktari, we have an appointment! The jungle drums are beating!

Dave and Gordon exit, while Ruth shakes her head and gathers up the dishes.

ANIMATED MAP - DAVE'S CAR CAREENS ALONG HIGHWAY THREE BEFORE TURNING INTO HIWAY CABINS

EXT. OUTSIDE HIWAY CABINS - EVENING

Dave and Gordon emerge from the Volkswagon. DEB ANSON approaches from the road below.

GORDON
Ah, here comes Deb now..

He smiles and waves as she approaches.

GORDON (CONT'D)
She's closing in for the kill.....

Deb is tall, probably over six feet and solidly built.

DEB
Hey, Gord, if I'd known you were coming, I could have sold tickets to see the two biggest dudes in Creston climbin' out of that little Volkswagen.

GORDON
Oh, we could probably fit you in there too, Deb. Couldn't we, Dave!

Deb's not quite sure how to take that, so she instead zeroes in on her prey - Dave. She walks around the car and gives him a hearty handshake.

DAVE
Glad to meet you. How's our patient?

Deb glances at Gordon.

DEB
Oh, he's super - I just got him today, as a matter of fact, from a guy who had to leave town.

Smothered laughter from Gordon. If looks could kill, Deb would have him in the ground. As they're talking, Deb is leading them down the hill towards a cabin, with a group of boys standing around in front of it. In the middle of the circle, a large tan dog is lying on its side. Dave kneels down beside the dog and rumples his ears.

DEB (CONT'D)
So I was taking him out for a walk, tryin' to get him used to me, and he ran out in front of a car.
(MORE)

DEB (CONT'D)

The guy couldn't have missed him, but the bugger never even stopped, just kept going. Can you imagine doin' that, hittin' a dog and just drivin' away?

DAVE

Hey, fella - you sure came out second best. Deb, can you hold him while I look at his leg?

Deb gets down beside Dave - close beside Dave - and holds the dog's head.

DEB

His name's Theo.

Dave holds the dog's front paw.

DAVE

I don't see anything that won't heal. The skin got worn right off here, so it will have to be bandaged, and the bandages will have to be changed a lot.

DEB

Ahhh....

Deb gives Gordon a wicked smile, then reality hits.

DEB (CONT'D)

.....uh, will that be expensive?

DAVE

I think he'll be OK - but first we have to stitch him up.

DEB

Well, you do the best you can with him for now, and I'll follow your instructions later. I'll bring a blanket for your car.

Deb walks away into her cabin and emerges a moment later with a blanket. Dave gathers Theo up in his arms and walks back with Gordon to the car. They spread the blanket on the back seat and carefully lay Theo down. Gordon and Dave climb back in, and Deb waves as they drive away.

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - NIGHT

Gordon lets out a WHOOP as soon as the car is on the road.

GORDON

Boy, she's really got her talons sharpened for your behind! Did you see her eyes light up when you said he'd need lots of aftercare?

DAVE

You've got an overactive imagination, Gordon. She just wants her dog looked after.

GORDON

Right! Her dog - that she got this afternoon! I'm surprised she could remember his name. Deb's hormones are more overworked than any imagination! You just wait and see!

ANIMATED MAP SHOWS THE CAR HEADING FOR THE WEST CRESTON FERRY.

EXT. AT THE WEST CRESTON FERRY LANDING - NIGHT

Dave stops the car and waits for the ferry. It doesn't move. Dave flashes his lights. Still nothing. He beeps his horn. The ferry starts moving towards them.

GORDON

Ever heard of the River Styx?

Dave gives him a look as they roll onto the ferry. Gordon rolls down his window.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Evening, Bill.

BILL

Evening.

GORDON

Think it'll rain tomorrow?

BILL

Nope.

Bill walks away.

GORDON

A man of few words.

DAVE

But he has sinks. And taps.

GORDON
Sinks?

DAVE
You'll see.

They drive off the ferry.

EXT. ON THE PORCH OF DAVE'S CABIN - NIGHT

Dave is carrying the dog while Gordon guides him up the steps. Gordon flicks his lighter and pulls open the door. He hits the light switch then realizes there's no power.

INT. INSIDE THE CABIN - NIGHT

Gordon keeps his lighter going as they enter the kitchen and Dave lays the dog down on the table.

DAVE
Could you hold him steady while I
light up the surgery?

Gordon holds the dog with one hand and the lighter with the other. Dave grabs a flashlight, then gets the gas lantern, gives it a pump and lights it up. A warm light fills the kitchen. Gordon looks around in dismay.

GORDON
Oh, man, how'd you end up in a
place like this?

DAVE
This was my grandma's house, now my
aunts owns it. It's somewhere to
start from, and besides, the price
is right.

Gordon is surveying the holes in the gyproc with disgust.

GORDON
It better be!

DAVE
Not afraid of bats, are you?

GORDON
Bats!

Dave ladles water from a bucket into a bowl and adds some surgical soap.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Where's your.....ah, I see what you mean - no sink.

DAVE
Nope. But Bill's got one....

Dave takes a syringe and draws up Atravet and Atropine. He points at the Atravet bottle.

DAVE (CONT'D)
This will make him drowsy, and...

He points at the Atropine bottle.

DAVE (CONT'D)
....this will keep him from salivating.

Dave gives the shot to Theo in the back of his neck.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Do you think you can hold him on his side so I can lift up his leg and get a better look at this?

Gordon obligingly holds the dog flat down on the table. Dave lifts the back leg.

GORDON
Holy Jesus! It looks like someone skinned him with a knife! Look at the size of that wound!

DAVE
Pretty amazing, isn't it? It looks like a vet school specimen - this muscle is called the pectineus. That over there is the femoral artery and the femoral vein. The one that's pulsing is the artery. He's really lucky that both those are intact.

GORDON
It looks bad enough. I'm glad you recognize all the parts. Can you make a dog out of them again?

DAVE
I guess we'd better find out, hadn't we? I'm going to put him under now.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

Hold his head against your shoulder for a moment, Gord, in case he struggles.

Dave injects sterile water into the Biotal bottle and shakes it, then draws up the mixture, finds the vein and injects part into Theo's front leg.

GORDON

How long does it take this stuff to work? You're kidding - it can't be that fast!

Theo is relaxing in Gordon's arms even as he speaks.

DAVE

You can let go of him now.

Dave checks the corner of the dog's eye and his tongue for response. He injects a little more, then refills the syringe and reattaches it to the needle, taping it to Theo's leg. Dave rolls the dog over so his good back leg is up.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Can you hold his leg up so I can get at the cut?

Gordon gamely grabs the leg, standing behind the dog. The dog lets out a huge fart. THHHH THHHHH

GORDON

Oh, my god - what did this dog eat? Does he ever smell rotten!

He backs as far away as possible, holding his nose with one hand while he holds the dog's leg with the other.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Does an anesthetic always make them fart like that?

DAVE

Not really, but it relaxes them, and they have no control over it.

Theo lets loose another huge fart. THHHH THHHHH

GORDON

Ewww! Man, he keeps passing wind like that, you're gonna need a new hind end man.

Gordon peeks over the edge of the dog's leg at the wound.

GORDON (CONT'D)
 Look at all that gravel - how're
 you gonna get all that out?

DAVE
 Most of it isn't bad - it's only
 along the edges that it's embedded,
 and I'm going to trim that off.

Dave pours fresh water into the basin and adds more surgical
 soap, then scrubs the wound.

GORDON
 He doesn't need all that skin?

DAVE
 Nope. It will grow back together,
 and he'll be good as new. He'll
 have a scar, but all the muscles
 and blood vessels look fine.

Dave finishes cleaning and gets the suture material and a
 Penrose surgical drain ready to use.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 So now I'm going to sew all this
 back together, one stitch at a
 time, and right here....

Dave takes the surgical drain.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 I'm going to put in a drain, so
 that while this heals, it can keep
 draining. He tore a lot of skin
 loose, so it's going to take awhile
 for everything to grow back
 together.

Dave inserts the drain, then keeps stitching.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INSIDE THE CABIN - LATER

Dave is just finishing up the bandage on Theo's front leg.

GORDON
 Hey, your patient's tryin' to run
 away...

Theo is trying to move his leg.

DAVE

Yep. Needs a little more of the
goof.

Dave pushes the plunger attached to Theo's leg. Within
seconds, Theo starts farting again. TTHHHHHHH TTHHHHH.

GORDON

Oh, no - there he goes again! Thank
heavens we're almost finished - I
couldn't take much more of that!

DAVE

I've got to admit, he's pretty
ripe. All the way out here in the
car, I thought it was you I was
smelling.

GORDON

Hah! Wow - that's a lot of stitches
- sort of looks like he had a run
in with a porcupine. What do you
plan on doing? Charging Deb by the
stitch?

DAVE

That's it for the front leg - all
cleaned and bandaged. Everything's
all patched up. He's managed to rip
all the skin off without doing any
damage to anything else. The bones
are fine - see that? No grinding
noise? Now Theo can wake up. Can
you keep an eye on him for a
second?

GORDON

Where you goin'?

DAVE

I have to give him a shot of
penicillin. I keep it in the root
cellar.

GORDON

The cellar?

DAVE

Yeah, it's cooler down there. No
electricity, no fridge, so it's the
cellar.

Dave grabs a flashlight and heads downstairs.

DAVE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Ewww.....

GORDON

Bats?

DAVE (O.S.)

Spider webs - a lot of'em. In the face.

Gordon hears a crash and a muttered curse.

GORDON

You OK?

DAVE (O.S.)

Yeah, I'm coming. Better put some stair treads on my repair list.

Dave reappears with the penicillin, picking spider's web from his shirt, then pulls some into a syringe, injecting it into Theo. He pulls the other syringe and tape off of Theo's leg. Theo is already starting to wake up and struggling to move.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I think if we put a sleeping bag down in the corner over there, we can stack boxes and stuff around to keep him confined while I get you home.

They put the blankets on the floor, then Dave picks the dog up and carries him over, depositing him on the blankets.

DAVE (CONT'D)

OK, Theo, all done. Wake up now.

He thumps Theo gently on the rib cage and Theo responds by trying to sit up, then gives up and lies back down to sleep.

DAVE (CONT'D)

He's good to go - I should be able to leave him for an hour or so - he's just going to sleep it off.

Dave turns off the lantern and he and Gordon pick their way to the door by flashlight.

GORDON

This is crazy! You can't stay up here.

DAVE

Well, it does have it's rewards.
Come over here.

Dave and Gordon sit down on the edge of the front porch. Dave gestures down the hill toward Creston. The vast expanse of the fields on the flats below are inky black, until the town of Creston rises from the far edge, miles away, covered by twinkling lights.

GORDON

Wow.

DAVE

Look up. See that constellation?
See the Big Dipper? The North Star?
I've never seen it clearer,
anywhere. It's absolutely
beautiful. That's what I get from
living here.

GORDON

You're right, it's absolutely
beautiful. But you can't live on a
view, and this dump could be used
as a movie setting for the
Munsters! We've got to find you a
better place to work out of! This
is ridiculous!

DAVE

There's only one thing I don't
have, and that's money. This is all
I can afford.

GORDON

That's why God invented banks!
They're here for a reason. If you
want to live out here, that's one
thing, but you've gotta have a
better place to practice! I'm on a
mission! I'll find something for
you.

DAVE

A man on a mission - sounds
exciting. In the meantime, I'd
better get you home to Ruth before
she comes looking for you.

Dave and Gordon climb into Dave's car and drive away.

END OF ACT 3

ACT 4

ANIMATED MAP - DAVE'S CAR GOING DOWN THE SWITCHBACKS,
CROSSING FERRY, UP CRAWFORD HILL IN CRESTON.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE VEITCH HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Gordon climbs out of the car and shuts the door, leaning down
to talk to Dave.

GORDON

I'm serious - I'm going through
some listings tomorrow morning so
why don't we meet around noon and
we can do a walk around?

DAVE

Gordon....

GORDON

No buts - I need to do this for
you. You know what? This has been
the most interesting dinner party
I've had in the last twenty years.
I'm not lettin' go of you, Dave -
you're too much fun. I didn't
realize how dull things were
gettin' till you showed up.
Buddy.....

Gordon stretches out his hand and shakes Dave's through the
window.

GORDON (CONT'D)

...this is the beginning of a
beautiful friendship.

DAVE

Why does that sound ominous?

GORDON

I've got some great ideas....

DAVE

Good night, Gordon.

GORDON

Tomorrow. Noon.

He points a finger at Dave as Dave puts the car in gear.

ANIMATED MAP OF DAVE'S CAR GOING BACK TO THE FERRY

EXT. AT THE FERRY LANDING - LATE NIGHT

Dave drives onto the ferry and Bill pulls up the gate, puts the ferry in gear.

BILL
Almost didn't make it.

DAVE
Yep.

BILL
Workin'?

DAVE
Nope. Still got sinks?

BILL
Yep.

DAVE
I need one.

BILL
Yep.

DAVE
And some taps.

BILL
Yep.

DAVE
Tomorrow?

BILL
Yep.

DAVE
When?

BILL
Four is good.

DAVE
I'll be there.

The ferry has docked - Dave drives off in the dark.

ANIMATED CAR CLIMBS THE SWITCHBACKS AND TURNS INTO DRIVEWAY.

EXT. OUTSIDE GRANDPARENT'S CABIN - LATE NIGHT

Dave walks around to the porch and lies down on the grass, linking his hands behind his head, looking up at the stars.

DAVE

Star light, star bright, first star
I see tonight, I wish I may, I wish
I might.....

Dave sighs, then gets up and heads into the cabin.

INT. INSIDE THE CABIN - LATE NIGHT

Dave checks up on his patient, then pulls his air mattress over closer to the dog's makeshift pen and climbs into the sleeping bag. The flashlight goes off.

INT. INSIDE THE CABIN - EARLY MORNING

Dave is under the sleeping bag when the ROOSTERS CROW. He mutters and pulls the bag further over his head as the ROOSTERS CONTINUE TO CROW. Then Theo licks his face and Dave pulls himself up.

DAVE

I'm going to eat those birds for
dinner....hi, Theo - you sure look
chipper today.

Theo pokes his nose into Dave's face - he's pushed his way through the makeshift pen, and is eagerly exploring Dave and the room, moving with just a slight limp.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I'll bet you're hungry - let's see
what we can find. Pretty slim
pickin's around here, boy - it's
not much better for me.

Dave finds a can of dogfood and opens it, holding out a tablespoonful to Theo, who quivers in anticipation as he gulps it down. The rest of the can follows and Theo looks hopefully for more.

DAVE (CONT'D)

That should keep you for now -
let's make sure you can pee, and
then you can go back to your mom
this morning.

Dave puts a nylon rope around the dog's neck and leads him out through the door.

EXT. OUTSIDE GRANDPARENT'S CABIN - MORNING

Dave lets the dog lead him around the trees for a pee, and over to the creek for a drink, then Dave leads him back to the car again. He opens the door, and puts the dog inside, leaving the windows down a bit for ventilation.

DAVE
Enough of this, boy. It's time to
take you back to mama. I'll be back
with your blanket in a second.

Dave walks back in the cabin.

INT. INSIDE THE CABIN - MORNING

Dave grabs a piece of bread and spreads some peanut butter onto it, folding it in half and taking a bite. He picks up the blanket and looks around the cabin with a sigh.

DAVE
Maybe Gordon's right.

Dave exits with the blanket.

EXT. OUTSIDE GRANDPARENT'S CABIN - MORNING

Dave pulls the door shut, goes down the steps and walks towards the car. He opens the door and throws the blanket down on the seat, then realizes he's alone. The dog is gone. He flings the seat back, looking in vain for the dog in the backseat. He looks at the partially rolled down window.

DAVE
No way! No WAY could he squeeze
through that! Theo!

Dave begins looking wildly around the car, trying to find the dog.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Oh, God! My first patient, and I
LOSE HIM! Theo!

Dave begins searching in the bushes around the house. As he's looking, a B.C. Tel truck pulls into the driveway behind him and the PHONE INSTALLER gets out.

PHONE INSTALLER
You Dave Perrin?

DAVE
What?

PHONE INSTALLER
Perrin. I've got a phone
installation work order here. Where
do you want it?

DAVE
I've got to find a dog right now, I
can't talk to you till I find him.

PHONE INSTALLER
You don't talk to me, you won't be
talking' to anybody - my next free
date is three weeks from now. You
want your phone installed or not?

DAVE
Yeah, I need the phone - the door's
open - put it in. I've got to go
find the dog. Theo!

The phone installer gets his toolkit out of the truck while
Dave stumbles out of the driveway onto the road, looking
frantically around. He calls out to Dave.

PHONE INSTALLER
Whereabouts do you want it?

Dave's gone - off looking for Theo.

DAVE
Theo!! THEO!! Where are you, you
damned dog!

Now he's starting to panic and he picks up speed as he gets
to the road. Still no Theo. He runs up the road, and turns
into Fred and Bea's driveway, racing up to their front door.
He pounds on the door, and Bea opens it.

BEA
My lands, Dave, what in the world's
the matter - you look like you've
seen a ghost!

DAVE
The problem is more that I've lost
a ghost! I brought a big brown
Doberman-type dog home last night
and sewed him up.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

This morning, I loaded him into my car and left him for a few seconds. By the time I got back, he'd jumped out the window and disappeared. He's got two injured legs with bandages, but he's running around here somewhere. If you see him, could you give me a holler?

BEA

I'll throw on some shoes and a jacket and see if I can help you find him.

DAVE

Thanks, Bea, I'd appreciate it. Wouldn't you know it? The first bloody dog I get to work on, and he runs off on me!

BEA

He can't have gone far. What's his name?

DAVE

Theo, but he doesn't seem to answer to it.

BEA

I'll get right out there, Dave, and I'll give Fred a holler and tell him to keep an eye out. He's gone out to get the cows in.

Dave sets out up the driveway at a fast pace.

DAVE

Thanks, Bea! I'm heading into the bush above Grampa's old garden site if you see anything of him. Theo!
THEOOO!

He walks through the bush around the edge of the fence line above the cabin.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Theo! THEOO!

In the distance Bea is calling for the dog too.

BEA (O.S.)

THEOOO!! THEOOO!

Dave steps into a mud bog and is suddenly up to his calf in mud.

DAVE

Oh, mother, how did I ever end up
in this mess!

He drags himself out of the mud by grabbing a branch, then loses his balance and rolls down the hill, landing face down in the old garden. He pounds the ground beside his head.

MUSIC - "YOU'RE SO FAR AWAY - CAROLE KING"

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MONTAGE OF SHOTS - WEST CRESTON - MORNING

Dave walks along the stream

He walks down the road

Knocks at the next neighbour's door

He hears a dog and runs but it's someone else's dog tied up

Goes through the woods

Walks back up the road toward the cabin

EXT. ON THE FRONT PORCH OF THE CABIN - DAY

Dave drags himself back onto the porch. He's covered with mud and can hardly move. He pulls a branch out of his hair, then puts his head down into both hands in total despair.

MUSIC CUTS AS FRED YELLS.

FRED (O.S.)

GET OUT OF HERE, you good for
nothing critter! You useless,
chicken killin' HOUND!

Dave springs up and runs down the driveway. There, traveling like a bat out of hell, running for safety is Theo, with FRED in hot pursuit behind him. Theo reaches Dave, and hides behind his legs, a couple of feathers hanging from his face. Dave snatches up the yellow rope that still trails behind Theo, holding onto it with a grip of iron.

DAVE

Oh, thank you Lord. Thank you!

Fred comes up, panting from his run.

FRED
Caught him tryin' to make a meal. I think he only got a mouthful of feathers, though.

Dave pulls Theo up onto the porch.

DAVE
Fred, you have no idea how glad I am to see this mutt... The guy just installed my phone - I'll phone Gordon and tell him I'll be late.

Dave pulls Theo through the doorway.

INT. INSIDE THE CABIN - MORNING

Dave find that the phone has been installed almost against the door - definitely not in the most convenient place. He shuts the door so the dog can't get out, then lifts the receiver to his ear.

PARTY LINE USER (O.S.)
So then he started running up and down the road shouting for somebody. I don't know....somebody named Theo.....do you think he's killed somebody out there? Hey, rubberneck, THE LINE'S IN USE - get off!

Dave hangs up the phone, looks at Theo, and walks out the door with him.

INT. GORDON VEITCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Dave enters the office. Gordon sees him and lets out a WHOOP.

GORDON
I'd just about given up on you! I guess we're havin' a late lunch!

DAVE
There were complications.

GORDON
Yeah, I told you Deb was after your body. She wouldn't let you leave after you dropped off her dog?

DAVE
Noooo....I lost the dog.

Gordon stops in the act of pouring Dave a cup of coffee.

GORDON
You lost the dog.

DAVE
Yep.

GORDON
The unconscious one from last night.

DAVE
Yep.

GORDON
The one that could hardly move.

He thrusts a cup of coffee into Dave's hand. Dave looks at the thick black brew and sets it on the desk.

DAVE
That's the one.

GORDON
I take it you found him?

DAVE
Yeah, after I was wearing about half the mud in the country.

GORDON
Mud?

DAVE
Mud. I had to get washed and changed before I could bring him back. After I'd spent an hour running through the bushes looking for him. That's why I'm late.

GORDON
You're lucky nobody reported a Sasquatch sighting. And here I thought it was Deb that was holding you up.

DAVE
Well, as to that, I haven't actually returned Theo yet.
(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)
 He's out in the car. I thought
 maybe we could drop out that
 way.....

GORDON
and you'd have a human shield
 to keep her off you. Got it. Ruth!

Ruth emerges from the back room.

RUTH
 Hi, Dave! How are you?

DAVE
 Better. Much better.

GORDON
 Dave and I are about to deliver our
 patient back to his owner.

RUTH
 So now you help with animal
 deliveries too?

GORDON
 We have business to discuss,
 dearie. We'll be back.

RUTH
 Don't forget you have a client
 coming at four!

She's talking to his retreating back. Ruth shakes her head
 and goes back into her office.

EXT. ON THE SIDEWALK BY DAVE'S CAR - DAY

DAVE
 I'm getting a sink at four.

GORDON
 From Bill?

DAVE
 Yep.

GORDON
 You been to his place before?

DAVE
 No....

GORDON
Ahhh...you're in for a treat.

Gordon taps the glass on the car window and Theo responds with a wagging tail. He climbs in the back seat when Gordon and Dave get into the front.

INT. INSIDE THE CAR - DAY

GORDON
Off to confront the fiery dragon,
we two knights of old!

DAVE
She can't be that bad.

GORDON
She's smitten with you so you're
safe right now, but she has quite a
temper. Know how she makes toast?

Gordon mimes a piece of bread on a fork in his hand, and breathes on it open mouthed, then flips the pretend bread over and breathes open mouthed on the other side. He holds the pretend bread up to Dave.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Toast!

ANIMATED MAP - CAR GOES FROM DOWNTOWN TO HIWAY CABINS

EXT. OUTSIDE HIWAY CABINS - DAY

Gordon and Dave emerge, then Dave gets Theo out, holding very firmly onto the rope. Deb emerges from her cabin and walks up to them, ignores the dog and hugs Dave.

DEB
Awww, look at him. Doctor Dave is
our hero, Theo - he saved your
life.

Dave looks a little uncomfortable, Gordon snickers. Dave hands her the dog's rope.

DAVE
You might want to keep him on a
leash for awhile, till he gets to
know you.

DEB
So what do I owe you, Dave?

Dave pulls out a slip of paper and hands it to her.

DAVE

I've written down all the expenses, and I've put some instructions there for aftercare - how to change the bandages and things.

Deb is a bit deflated.

DEB

Oh. I thought I'd have to get you to do that.

DAVE

No, you should be able to handle it, unless he's showing any signs of infection. I'll drop by and take the drain out in a few days.

Deb looks down at the bill.

DEB

Uh, I don't get paid until next week - is it OK if I wait till then to pay you?

DAVE

Yeah, that's fine - why don't you pay me when I take out the drain. And don't forget that you have to change the bandages every day - I brought you some supplies for that. And keep that bandage on the front paw dry.

Dave reaches in the car, pulls out a paper bag and hands it to Deb.

DEB

OK. Say, have you seen our local drive-in yet? They've got "Battle for Planet of the Apes" starting there this weekend. I'd really like to say "thank you" for everything - maybe we could....

GORDON

Unfortunately Dave is gonna be very busy for the next few weeks.

DEB

Even at night?

GORDON
Especially at night! He's going to
be working on his new office space.

DEB
His new office space?

She looks at Dave suspiciously, eyes narrowing.

DEB (CONT'D)
Where?

Dave looks wildly at Gordon.

DAVE
Well, it's uh.....

GORDON
It's a secret until his ad comes
out in The Advance. You'll find out
soon. But he's all tied up for now,
right, Dave, working on the office.
Night and day.

Dave nods, not quite meeting Deb's eyes.

DAVE
All tied up. Night and day. Well,
good luck with Theo, Deb.

He starts to leave, then turns back a bit reluctantly.

DAVE (CONT'D)
And I have a feeling that you
should maybe keep him away from
chickens.

Dave and Gordon get back in the car. Deb pets Theo and
watches them drive away.

INT. INSIDE DAVE'S CAR - DAY

DAVE
What new office?

GORDON
You'll see. It's a surprise.

DAVE
Do you think she'll ever pay me?

GORDON
Do you think you'll take her to the
drive-in?

DAVE
No.

GORDON
Then, no.

END OF ACT 4

TAG

ANIMATED CAR ON MAP GOES TO DOWNTOWN CANYON STREET

EXT. ON THE FAR END OF CANYON STREET IN CRESTON - DAY

Dave and Gordon are standing in front of the most run down, beaten up stucco building in the whole town. It's a two storey duplex - one side is vacant, the other side is obviously a barbershop with a barber pole out front, a sign hangs above with "Anthony's Barber Shop" on it, and accordion music echoes from inside. An elderly native Indian with a scarred face is leaning against the doorway, snoozing in the sun.

DAVE

Tell me you're joking. My god, this place is worse than my Grandpa's!

GORDON

I have to admit it's a fixer-upper...

DAVE

More like a burn it down-er!

GORDON

Never judge a book by it's cover. I gotta admit that it's not the best, but right at the moment it's the only place in town I know that's available and in your price range. Come on, let's go in and have a look. Looking can't hurt. And then I'll buy you lunch.

DAVE

It's making my eyes sore already. It better be a good lunch.

GORDON

This used to be Gunnar Larsen's Photo Studio. It's close to everything...right in the heart of downtown - almost.

DAVE

Yeah, I can smell the beehive burner from the mill right now. Very downtown.

Gordon skirts the Indian in the doorway.

GORDON
Morning, George.

The Indian nods and dozes off again. Gordon pulls out a key and opens the door of the vacant side. He holds it wide for Dave and bows as he gestures him through the door.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Enter your kingdom! Oh, watch those
broken floorboards.

They walk inside.

DAVE
OH MY GOD! (O.S.)

END OF TAG

END OF SHOW