

# **"MEL'S HOLE"**

A TELEPLAY ADAPTED FOR OUTER LIMITS

by

W. B. MARTIN

Pebble Mountain Productions

(Prisons Foundation Submission 4/2014)

A true story of events heard on the popular late night paranormal talk show, Coast to Coast, with Art Bell, founder, at the time of this event. Story written in a fictional manner around events spoken of by Mel Waters as he appeared a number of times on air with Art Bell. He bought a ranch west of Ellensburg Washington. There was a trash pit in his back yard that neighbors would stop by before his acquiring the property, to dump old appliances, dead livestock (an oxymoron??) and old furniture. His dog shied away from it. Eccentric locals knew its history. One day, Mel tried to measure the bottom of the pit. That's the day that changed his life. A creepy gooseflesh story whose moral is; some things are better left alone.

Author enrolled in a UCLA sponsored screenwriter's class at a prison facility in Lancaster, Calif. Actors and directors from the industry would visit our small class monthly to talk shop and review our scripts. I produced 18 scripts in the 3 year period, 4 won first place in their annual competitions. I teach screen writing from time to time in prison to interested groups. I find it's very therapeutic for the participants.

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(As of 4/2014)

Note: Author is currently in Federal Court for appeal review of state trial holding 14 causes of action for release from custody due to illegal wiretap, fraudulent extradition warrant, no dates, past due legislative out date by 12 years, trial caused by an HBO documentary, not by a criminal complaint. HBO withdrew the program for defamation.

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# HOW TO READ A SCREENPLAY

If you are reading a screenplay for the first time, there are some things you need to know to follow along. A screenplay is a recipe card to make a movie. The wide text is the location and time of day, what the crew sets up, what the camera sees or FRAMES, and the action that takes place.

The narrow text down the center of the page is the speaking character, and what that character speaks. Sometimes, right under the character name in parenthesis, is a suggestion by the author to the actor to speak a special way at this point. After the first few pages, the flow will pick up and create visual images in your head just like watching a movie. Each page is a minute of film time. The main crew code words are as follows:

FADE IN: or FADE OUT: The beginning and end of the entire movie.

EXT. or INT. The scene is set up EXTERIOR, or INTERIOR, requiring different equipment for each.

INT. could be a bedroom, cave, car, etc. EXT. – City Park

After EXT. or INT. is the basic location; EXT. BASEBALL FIELD INT. BUSY OFFICE IN HIGH RISE

Next is DAY or NIGHT. The time the scene takes place for the story to happen.

Day or Night is omitted if it's obviously a few moments later in a nearby area, like moving from a kitchen to a living room in the same house. Try this:

INT. MOTORHOME – NIGHT – TRAVELING Know where you are? Good.

Then the events of that scene are laid out for the actors to move within, camera to follow, special effects to be added.

Other CAPITAL words alert various crew to special needs for the story. HORN BLARES. BELL RINGS.

SPFX= Special Effects (visual), SFX= Sound effects or Foley.

New characters are capitalized to introduce them into the story. MR. SMITH enters the room, laughing.

V.O. Is Voice Over, like a narrator introducing a scene like Richard Dryfuss in Stand By Me, or an internal thought within the character's head before making a move.

O.S. Is Off Screen. A spoken part or noise, nearby or in another room, out of FRAME. BILL(O.S.) HELP ME !!

B.G. Action or visual seen in the Back Ground. Crowd gathers in B.G.

POV Point Of View. POV: Car driving into tunnel. POV: Bill is looking over the cliff to the river.

(BEAT) A short pause, usually in speech to denote thought or hesitation. I THINK (BEAT) I'LL GO ANYWAY.

(PAUSE) A long beat. Same purpose.

INTERCUT or MATCH CUT Focuses on a certain item which appears in the next scene, or conversation of two people back and forth on a phone call for example.

INSERT: and RETURN: A close up on an object, like character looking at his watch to establish time.

Music cues are identified as suggestions to back up the scene to establish mood, message, or era.

Editing cues or camera angles are usually left to the editor and director unless a specific need arises by the author.

Hope you enjoy the experience. Feedback always helps the author fine tune the story before production.

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= THE OUTER LIMITS =

....."MEL'S HOLE".....

Teleplay by  
W.B. Martin  
(c)4/97 PMP

FADE IN: (ACT I)

EXT. RUSTIC RANCH HOUSE ON 100 WOODED ACRES - MORNING

Central Washington State, remote property outside Ellensburg.  
Propane tank, trees shading a house with a tin roof.

Workshop behind the house.

INT. KITCHEN

MEL, retired 60 and single, not too neat, not too smart, is  
cleaning up after breakfast. Stuffing a plastic trashbag  
and tying it off to take out. Sets the dirty dishes in  
the sink for later.

Leftover food in the 'frige.

TIMEX, Mel's dog, a bit smarter than his owner, is curled  
up on his blanket in the corner.

MEL

Come on Mister T.  
No rest for the wicked.

Mel grabs his cap, the bag of trash, and heads out the  
back door. Timex is quick to follow.

EXT. 100 YARDS BEHIND THE HOUSE - MORNING

Timex follows Mel, but stops a good distance from the  
trash-pit.

Waits, alert.

Mel notices the hesitation...

MEL

God Almighty !  
What's wrong with you ?  
Come on over here, it won't bite.

Timex shys, whines at disobeying a direct order.

Stays put.

Mel walks up to a 2-3 foot old stone embankment around a nine foot diameter hole in the ground.

This corner of the lot is littered with small random piles of scrap lumber and junk.

Things have been there for a while.

Mel folds back a tattered screen cover over the opening of the pit, dumps the trash, leaving the lid folded back as he heads to the workshop.

As he reaches an equal distance from the pit, Timex rejoins him.

Mel shakes his head at the odd behavior.

MEL

What if I're to fall in,  
accidental like ?  
Who'd I call for help ? You !?

HA !

That's a thought I'd hate to ponder.

Mel unlocks the door and props it open, goes inside.

MEL

Don't take it personal now...

A HAND-PAINTED SIGN over the door says:

PEBBLE MOUNTAIN MEDICINE BAGS  
NATIVE-AMERICAN REMEDIES  
FOR ALL-AMERICAN ILLS

After Mel and Timex go into the shed, we slowly DOLLY-UP to the pit.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

An old proverb explains;  
The journey of a thousand miles  
begins with the first step...

Or does the first step begin a  
journey of a thousand miles.

It would seem wise to FIRST consider  
where one steps...

For a journey -- is sure to follow.

FADE TO:

## [OUTER LIMITS HEADER]

There is nothing wrong with your  
television set, we control the vertical,  
we control the horizontal.  
From a dull blur to crystal clarity,  
for a journey to...  
The Outer Limits.

FADE TO BLACK:

[COMMERCIAL BREAK]

FADE IN: (ACT II)

INT. MEL'S WORKSHOP - DAY (CREDITS ROLL)

Mel makes Native-American cures and elixirs from old recipes  
he's collected over the years. Income hobby to pass the time.

Lab glassware in use, shelves of supplies.

Photos of old indian scenes fill the walls.

Mel is mixing a batch, with a line of bottles waiting to  
be filled.

Timex perks up.

MEL

What is it boy?

A horn from a pickup is HEARD.

Mel lowers the flame and goes outside. Timex follows.

EXT. NEAR PIT

An older hydraulic lift stakebed truck is backing up to  
the pit area.

GEORGE BUCKLEY is a neighbor. About 35. Fat and simple.

GEORGE

Hey Mel.

Got a few donations if it'S ALRIGHT.

MEL

I'm kind of particular about  
what gets tossed 'n what doesn't.  
What is it you got?

GEORGE

Jus' an old dryer that gave up the ghost, and a cow I had to take down with the sickness.

Mel looks back at Timex who then retreats back towards the house. George notices.

GEORGE (cont)

I guess it's just you and me if you're up to it.

Mel pulls the rest of the screen off the hole as George preps the truck to dump the dryer over the edge.

MEL

Smell o' death I guess...

GEORGE

How's the Navajo medicine man business comin'?

MEL

Historically, it's derived from Modoc, Kutsavi, and a little Washo out of the Reno area. Mail order sales are picking up, but not much call yet in town.

Mel and George slide the dryer off the truck bed and into the pit.

They peer over the side and listen...

(long pause)

Silence...

MEL

Strange...  
Guess there's still room for more.  
I can't rightly tell.

GEORGE

My pa used to come here regular with discards.  
Cripes ! There's more 'pliances in that pit than in all the Sears and Roebucks !  
... not countin' the organics.

Mel and George jump off the truck bed.  
George cranks the handle to tilt the bed for the cow.

GEORGE

I know ol' man Ghalleger used it for  
pert-near forty year before selling  
the place.

A real Smithsonian collection of  
American consumerizm down there it is.

MEL

I figure a day will come when  
I'll have to cap it off.

The cow slides into the pit.

No sound of impact.

Timex looks on.

EXT. TWO LANE ROAD TO THE VILLAGE OF ELLENSBURG - DAY

Mel and Timex driving up to the small group of stores.

BOY, a scruffy, country-overalls 12 year old is sitting  
on the porch of the GENERAL STORE, slight autistic rocking  
back and forth.

The boy's oblivion shifts to an intense stare at Mel's  
dog as they pull up and park.

Mel gets out, Timex follows.

The boy holds out his hand, Timex comes over for a friendly  
pat.

BOY

What' you call him?

MEL

'names Timex.

The boy looks up at Mel curious, waiting for the rest.

MEL (cont)

My watch dog.

BOY

I'd bite you if you gave me  
a name like that.

Mel smiles to himself and starts to walk in the store.

The boy stares into the dog's eyes.

BOY  
He won't go near it,  
will he...

Mel stops.

BOY (cont)  
'n you never see no birds or  
squirrels round it...

The boy looks back at Mel, a little scared.

BOY (cont)  
I never stared it in the face.  
It creeped me to shivers.

Mel walks into the store. The boy gets up and follows.  
Timex waits outside.

INT. COUNTER OF STORE

PAUL, the owner, is stacking 4 cases of small elixir bottles  
on the counter.

Mel sets a few supplies with his order.

PAUL  
Hey Mel, saw you drive up.  
I think it's all here.  
The wife thanks you for clearing  
up her sinus problem.  
Wants a few more bottles to  
mail back to her folks 'n friends  
next time you're down.

Mel signs the charge ticket, happy with the news.

The boy grabs two of the boxes to help carry out of the store.

MEL  
What do you know about the pit.

BOY  
My grandpa's place.  
I didn't go there much.

Mel grabs the rest of his order and heads out.

The boy follows.

MEL  
Next week Paul...



EXT. TRUCK

Setting the last box in back, Mel pulls a dollar out of his pocket.

MEL

Here, buy yourself a soda.

Mel and Timex get in the truck, the dog's attention to the boy as they drive off.

INT. MEL'S KITCHEN - DAY

Mel's got a cup of coffee, handcrank adding machine on the table and mail orders spread around to fill.

He's thinking...

MEL

By God !

... why didn't I think of this sooner.  
Come on Timex, we're goin' fishing.

Mel sets the coffee down, gets up and goes to the closet. Pulls out a good size fishing pole with a full reel of line and sinker attached.

EXT. AT THE PIT - DAY

Mel has the cover folded back, his line and sinker over the edge of the pit.

The sinker lowers into the darkness.

The line spins off the reel, Mel's thumb metering the feed. He's focused on the feel of the pole.

MEL

I may snag me a Chinaman ole boy.  
Get ready to catch him.

Mel looks around at his side for Timex. But sees he is a good distance away, waiting.

MEL

Suit yourself.

Mel slows up as the line reaches the end where it's tied off to the reel.

He clicks on the drag. Mel's baffled.

Mel slowly dips the tip of the rod a few times, trying to feel if its hitting bottom.

Surprised at the depth, he looks back at Timex for an answer....

Then back at his rod.

The tip of the rod jerks twice. Timex darts away.

Mel drops the pole in shock and falls back on his ass.

**FADE TO BLACK:**

[COMMERCIAL BREAK]

FADE IN: (ACT III)

EXT. VILLAGE STORE - DAY

Mel drives up to the General Store. Parks, walks inside.  
Timex waits on the porch.

INT. STORE

Paul is stocking a shelf on the far side. Nods at Mel as he comes in.

PAUL  
Be right with you Mel.

A VERY OLD MAN is watching a black & white tv in the corner of the store. Pot belly stove, a few chairs, checker game sits idle.

The Boy is sitting nearby watching with the old man.

Mel walks over to the fishing supplies and grabs the remaining seven, 1000-yard spools of 20 pound test monofilament line.

Mel looks around the shelves for more of the same.

MEL  
Say Paul, you got any more in back?

PAUL  
What are you after, twenty pound test?

MEL  
Yeah -- as much as you got.

Paul disappears into the back room.

Without turning away from the tv...

OLD MAN  
Won't work.

Mel gives the man a curious glance.

The boy turns from the tv program to notice Mel, jumps up to help him.

BOY

Hi Mel. Back so soon?

Paul comes out with a case of 24 spools of 20 pound test.

PAUL

I found this.

Two dozen -thousand yard spools of  
twenty pound test mono.

Take it or leave it.

Case price to sweeten the deal.

Mel peels off a few bills to cover the tab.

BOY

That's some serious kite flyin' Mel.  
That's almost... eighteen mile.

MEL

It's not for a kite.  
It's for the pit.

BOY

Won't work.

As Mel weighs a spool on a scale and jots down the weight,  
the boy wanders back to his place on the floor near the  
tv. Rocks a bit with a blank stare.

Mel comes over and sits next to the old man.

MEL

What am I dealing with, old man?

OLD MAN

Hear tell it was a sacrificial  
burial ground for the Yakima  
long ago.

--  
It was all quite a set up before the  
quake brought it all down.

The old man tilts his head back as if he's dozed off.

Mel starts to get up, sees the boy standing up dominoes  
around a small black ashtray like the old man described  
the pit of long ago.

The old man continues from a distant memory...

OLD MAN

One night as a youngin'...  
Me and boy's grand-dad was campin'  
close to the place.

--

All of a sudden, all the night sounds  
fell deathly quiet.

--

I saw a shaft of black come out of  
that pit that swallowed the moonlight  
clear out of the night sky.

Stars too !

Black as burnt pitch it was.  
We lit outta there so fast it took  
near a week for our names to  
catch up with us.

MEL

It's just a damn sink hole.  
Fulla garbage and junk.  
You'll see, ain't nothin'.

Mel gets up and grabs his supplies, exits the store.

EXT. CURBSIDE

Mel sets the box in his truck and sees PRESTON'S TV SHOP  
across the street. He goes over.

INT. TV SHOP

Bell tingles as the door closes.

PRESTON comes out of the back.

PRESTON

Help ya?

MEL

You got a couple of old picture tubes  
I can pick up?  
They explode don't they when you  
break 'em?

PRESTON

Actually they implode first...  
From the vacuum.

(beat)

If you don't mind me askin'...

MEL

I need to drop them down a pit  
to make some kinda noise when  
they hit bottom.

Preston thinks about it, then...

PRESTON

Pull around back.

EXT. MEL'S TRUCK IN ALLEYWAY

Mel has two 25 inch picture tubes in the back of his truck  
as he pulls out on to the street.

The boy jumps out of nowhere and flags Mel to a sudden  
stop.

The picture tubes slide forward, Mel squints for the  
explosion.... ... just bumps.

Boy comes up to Mel's window and shows him a sketch.

BOY

The old man sent this.

Mel looks at a sketch of stone slabs identical to the famous  
Stonehenge, but with Mel's pit in the middle.

EXT. MEL'S PROPERTY ENTRANCE ROAD - SUNSET

As Mel pulls up, another truck is parked near the pit.

JACK is an older back-woods hunter, gun rack in his  
4-wheel drive.

Jack lays a dead hunting dog on the retaining wall of the  
pit.

He's emotionally distressed.

Mel walks up beside Jack.

JACK

Ol' Blue was a good one she was...  
Hope you don't mind my bringing  
her over here.  
Tradition I guess.

MEL

Yeah, yeah. Sure Jack.  
Anything I can do?

JACK

No, ... it's just a piece of  
my heart and soul gone.

--

I'll miss her.  
Covered alot of territory we did.

Jack lays his head on the dog's neck in a last good-bye,  
then rolls her gently off into the blackness.

After a moment...

MEL

Stay for dinner Jack? Talk?

JACK

Thanks Mel, I think I'll get back  
and turn in early.  
Get a fresh start tomorrow.

Mel gives Jack a sympathetic hand on Jack's shoulder as  
they leave the pit.

Jack wipes his eyes dry.

A SLOW DROP in the angle brings the pit's retaining wall  
into LOWER FRAME as Jack and Mel's figures become distant  
in the sunset.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MEL'S RANCH - LATE NIGHT

Millions of stars in the night sky. Full moon.  
We see the pit area in the moonlit night.

SFX: NIGHT SOUNDS of crickets, croaky frog, coyote howling  
in the distance as we DOLLY UP on Mel's bedroom window.

Mel's propped up in bed, reading a paperback under a small  
bedlamp.

(BEAT)

(BEAT)

ALL NIGHT SOUNDS go suddenly quiet.

Mel notices the change.

FADE TO BLACK:

[COMMERCIAL BREAK]

FADE IN: (ACT IV)

EXT. MEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT - DEAD QUIET

Bedroom window is now dark.

INT. MEL'S BEDROOM

Mel is in bed - disturbed sleep - tossing, restless.

EXT. AT PIT

Many high-pitched sounds of mischevious laughter are HEARD.

A set of long skinny fingers come over the edge of the embankment of the pit.

A swarm of evil GREMLINS pull themselves out of the pit and scatter all directions.

A few grab Timex and drag him, yelping, back to the pit.

INT. MEL'S BEDROOM

Mischevious laughter growing in intensity and numbers, O.S.

Mel is sweating, tossing, clutching the sheets...

... then suddenly wakes up.

NIGHT SOUNDS return to normal. Bad dream??

Mel gets nervously out of bed, walks to the window to look outside.

A cloud drifts and lets the full moon shine through.

Mel at the windowsill, looks in the direction of the pit and sees stillness amongst the gentle sounds of crickets, frogs, and the distant howling coyote.

Mel SIGHS in relief.

All of a sudden, Timex jumps in through the window from the outside, knocking Mel back onto the bed, scaring him badly...



MEL

Damn you Timex !  
I thought you were a gonner !  
Now lie down while I get my  
heart to beating again.

Mel crawls back in bed and relaxes. Closes his eyes.

(BEAT)

Timex's ears perk up. Looks at the ceiling.

Mel sits up in bed, wide-eyed.

Tiny footsteps are HEARD<sup>r</sup> scampering across the tin roof.

Then back.

Mel grabs his bedside shotgun and fires at the ceiling.

Timex cowers from the noise.

A hole blown through the roof.

Mel listens...

The roof is silent.

MEL

Remind me to close the lid  
on that pit tomorrow.

Mel reaches over and turns on his CLOCK RADIO.

The ART BELL late night talk show is on.

Mel listens, he's too wound up to sleep.

ART BELL (V.O.)

... so to summarize your theory  
Dr. Martin, the single frequency or  
wavelength put out by our city's  
streetlights, specifically correlates  
with the body's resonant frequency,  
which produces violent behavior in  
those people with high exposure to  
those lights.

Our city's youth.

DR. MARTIN (V.O.)

Yes, Art.

Similar to plants that are denied  
all colors of the natural spectrum.  
The growth becomes dysfunctional.

When impacted upon the body's seven  
harmonic color needs, the most dramatic  
finding is that compassion is starved  
to death, and the expression of character  
is pushed beyond its limits.  
Juvenile violence can't help but happen  
under these conditions.

ART BELL (V.O.)

We'll take a few callers with Dr. Martin  
after this break on the Art Bell  
Radio Program.

EXT. PIT - NEXT MORNING

As Mel leaves the house, Timex is on the porch with a  
dead squirrel in his mouth.

MEL

I see you found our gremlin.

Mel brings the spools of line out to the pit.

George Buckley and the boy are there too.

George lights an oil-soaked rag on a stick and brings the  
smokey torch over to the pit's opening.

The smoke's direction changes and is drawn gently down  
into the hole.

DISSOLVE - LATER:

Mel, George and the boy drag an old doorless refrigerator  
over to the edge of the pit and tumble it in.

They listen carefully...

LONG SILENCE...

MEL

It's like I'd gone plumb-deaf !

Mel and George push the picture tubes over the side and wait for the implosions. -- Long silence.

Boy yells into the pit.

BOY  
H E L L O ! ! !

No echo.

George grabs the boy's belt and moves like he's going to push him over the edge. The boy freaks out. When George pulls him back, the boy beats on George.

BOY  
THAT ! WASN'T ! FUNNY !  
Now I gotta change my drawers you idiot!

Mel calms the boy.

MEL  
Help me with this line.

Boy gives George a dirty look.  
George holds up his hands: "Sorry".

Mel ties a cowbell on the end of the line. Boy pulls out a partial roll of Lifesaver candies.

BOY  
Here.

MEL  
No thanks. Not now.

BOY  
Tie a few to the string.  
If you hit water, they'll dissolve.

Mel likes the idea and ties a few candies on the line.

MEL  
...and if a few show up missing?

Boy stares back at Mel, refusing to consider the possibility.

Mel tosses the line over a rail across the pit, and runs the string around a post to tie off the end of the line when he ties on a new spool. He runs a dowel through the spool, the boy holding one end, Mel the other. Mel lets the string play off the spool and into the pit.

DISSOLVE TO:

All but the last spool is empty. Mel unspooling the last portion into the pit.

George is looking into the darkness, listening...

MEL

This bothers me.

GEORGE

This pit may be worth some money if you play your cards right.

Mel ties off the end of the line.

MEL

When you get back to town,  
see if Preston can bring a reel  
of cable out with a camera and light.  
Maybe our line is just piled up  
in a bog a few hundred feet down.

The boy is sitting with Timex a good distance from the pit.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DENSE WOODED AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

Jack is dressed in hunting gear, with a scoped .30/06 rifle. He is moving carefully through the underbrush, looking for deer.

He sees a buck through his binoculars and starts to move towards it. As he walks, he momentarily spots his old dog Blue through the trees, but fails to see Blue between others where she should be. Blue is paralleling Jack's path, moving ahead and closer.

Jack's attention is drawn to his old dog, almost in a run to catch up with her. But she's not always 'there'.

JACK

BLUE !? Is that you girl ?

Jack gets closer and closer to Blue. He doesn't notice the buck has been scared away.

A large brown bear suddenly rears up directly in Jack's path.

Blue attacks the bear.

Jack falls back, drops and loses his rifle in the undergrowth.

Blue is in a fierce struggle with the bear.

Fighting panic, Jack finds the rifle and fires, scaring the bear off.

Jack regains his senses and gets up, not believing what he saw.

Jack searches the area of the struggle. Blue's not there.

JACK

Blue !!

--

Blue !!

Where are you girl ?!

Are you all right ?

Jack's emotions flood in on him. His dog just saved his life.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PIT - LATE DAY

Preston, the TV man, has brought some video equipment in his service van.

The boy is on his bike, pulling the cable off the spool and down the drive to allow lowering of the camera and light into the hole.

Preston gets the TV monitor turned on, headphones plugged in, and connects the video jacks to the back of the monitor.

A nod from Preston. Mel and the boy start to lower the video camera down into the hole.

We SEE the descent of the camera into the abyss on Preston's monitor.

Scraps of trash and garbage stuck to the walls, but it starts to smooth out.

Preston notices something in the far distance.

On screen a faint vortex appears in the blackness, the camera itself slowly turning from the twists in the cable.

MEL  
How's it coming Press ??

PRESTON  
Hard to tell with the unsteady camera.

MEL  
'SCUSE ME !!

PRESTON  
No -- keep going.  
You're doing fine.  
I should have brought another spool.

The boy goes to untangle a twist in the cable near the van as Mel continues to feed cable into the pit.

Preston suddenly pushes his headphones tighter to his head, listening intently.

Mel feeds more cable into the hole.

Preston gets a look of shock on his face by what he sees on his monitor.

A realization beyond his wildest imagination is taking shape.

Preston stares hard at Mel, unable to speak.

The FAINT SOUNDS of a thousand voices building in agonizing pain is barely audible through the headphones, drilling into Preston's mind.

MEL  
Preston, what is it !!?

Preston spastically rips off his headphones as he jumps back from the monitor, suddenly afraid of it.

Mel reacts to go help and forgets his grasp on the cable.

It spools quickly into the pit, yanking the power connection from the monitor before Mel can grab the end.

Preston is fiercely shaking his head, his greatest fear realized.

He runs from the property.

MEL  
Preston !!

Mel looks at the boy who is sitting huddled in shock, rocking hard back and forth on the lawn near the house, thumb in mouth.

Eyes slammed shut.

Timex is in the house looking through a closed window. After a moment, he ducks away, letting the curtain fall back in place across the window.

Mel gets a long stick and slams the cover shut on the hole.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT - TRAVELING SHOT

Preston is running scared on the highway, look of shock still on his face.

He is oblivious to a car that almost hits him head on, honking as it passes.

FADE TO BLACK:

[COMMERCIAL BREAK]

FADE IN: (ACT V)

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Mel pulls up to the General Store and gets out of his truck.

He sees the boy sitting on the soda cooler, non-responsive to Mel's presence.

Mel looks across the street at Preston's TV shop.

Curtains are drawn, it looks closed up.

Mel stares a moment, lost in thought...

BOY

ONE MILLION !

One hundred twenty three thousand !

Two hundred, inches of line...

--

Why don't you CLIMB down to find what you're after.

MEL

I'M too heavy.

(PAUSE)

Mel gets an idea and stares the thought to the boy who picks up on Mel's devious plan.

(PAUSE)

BOY

No way Jose' !!

Mel pulls out a dollar.

Boy gives a definite NO. Mel shrugs, then goes in the General Store.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MEL'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Mel is putting the last labels on a batch of bottles ready for shipping. After the last one, he shuts off the light, grabs his flashlight, and heads back to the house.



Timex follows.

MEL  
Come on Mr. T.  
Let's call it a night.

INT. MEL'S KITCHEN

Mel sits with a sandwich and a beer at the table.

The ART BELL show is on the RADIO.

ART BELL (V.O.)  
Open line tonight on the Art Bell  
Radio show.

Anything you want to talk about.

Let's see who can top that last caller.

Mel looks at his phone.

INT. ART BELL'S BROADCAST STUDIO (PHARUMP, NEVADA) - NIGHT

Clock on wall SHOWS: 11:35

ART BELL  
Hello, your name please.

MEL (V.O.)  
Hi Art, first time caller.  
My name's Mel from  
Ellensburg, Washington.  
I'm a little nervous.

I got a situation in my backyard  
and wonder if your callers  
might have a clue to what I'm  
dealing with.

ART BELL  
Well let's have it.  
Half the world is listening.  
No need to be nervous.

MEL (V.O.)  
Well... It's a nine foot diameter pit  
without a bottom.

TRANSITION DISSOLVE:

Clock on wall SHOWS: 12:15

## SERIES OF CALLERS:

MEL (V.O.)

... so the situation's getting out of hand.

I was hoping for a geologist or spilunker that might have seen one of these before.

ART BELL

Caller on line two, you're on with Mel.

CALLER #2 (V.O.)

Hi Art, Mel...  
Have you tried lowering a watch down to the bottom?  
Maybe it's a time portal to another demension.

See if the time's different when you pull it back up.

MEL (V.O.)

No I haven't, I may try that.  
Digital or wind-up?

ART BELL

Good question.  
Caller on Line #3, you're on with Mel.

CALLER #3 (V.O.)

I've worked alot of oil rigs.  
The largest shaft I know of was a twenty four inch bore to twenty thousand feet.  
But at nine feet, you really have something unusual.

I thought it might be an old gyser shaft.  
You might check for calcium deposits around the base.

ART BELL

Hi caller, you're on with Mel.

WOMAN CALLER (V.O.)

I've been listening to Mel's story.  
I don't know, I think he just wants the attention. A lonely old man that wants his fifteen minutes of fame...  
I've never seen anything like he describes.  
It's just a hoax, plain and simple.

MEL (V.O.)

Sorry you feel that way mam'.  
I've got nothing to gain by this call.  
I'm happy with my little retirement  
business and my land.  
That's all I need.  
Just a little peace in the valley.

ART BELL

Next caller, what have you got for  
us on this whole situation,  
... no pun intended.

CALLER #4 (V.O.)

That last caller needs to visit Carlsbad,  
or that larger cave they found next to it.  
Lechigia or something.  
These were just holes on the surface.

ART BELL

I've been there and it's fascinating.  
Thank you caller.  
Next line, you're on with Mel.

CALLER #5 (V.O.)

I'm a member of a recently declassified  
remote viewing group that participated  
in desert Storm.  
I see the hole at sixty three thousand,  
two hundred feet, straight down.

ART BELL

... and how did you get this figure?

CALLER #5 (V.O.)

Simple, from my head.

INT. MEL'S KITCHEN - RADIO ON - LATE NIGHT

ART BELL (V.O.)

And so, Mel's hole continues to be  
a mystery.  
I'll see if I can get somebody  
up there, Mel, to follow up on  
this fascinating story.

Thank you for calling this evening.  
We'll be right back after this word...

Mel has gotten up and gone to the back door, WHISTLES  
for Timex.

No show...

Mel leaves the door open a crack, turns off the light and the radio and heads for the sack.

--  
The back door creaks open in the darkness...

FADE TO BLACK:

[COMMERCIAL BREAK]

FADE IN: (ACT VI)

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY - TURN-OFF ROAD

Mel stops at his mailbox to get his mail.

A few ARMY TRUCKS pass on the road behind him as he thumbs through a few envelopes.

He then sees a BLACK HELICOPTER pass overhead.

Next, Mel is driving down his dirt access road and sees a BLOCKADE across his property line entrance about a quarter mile from the house.

Army intelligence GUARD motions him over.

Mel pulls over, gets out.

A large trailer is allowed to pass through the gate and onto his property.

Mel walks up to the guard at the gate.

MEL

Excuse me, this is my place.

GUARD

We have it cordoned off to investigate a plane crash.

Mel steps back and stands in his truck bed to look down the valley.

He SEES the trailers and activity in the distance down by the pit.

No smoke, no wreckage.

Mel walks back to the guard.

MEL

I don't see any smoke or damage.  
What kind of plane was it?

GUARD

Leave the area.  
You'll be contacted when you may return.

MEL

You can't do this !  
This is MY private property.

A higher ranking OFFICER comes out of the shadows.

OFFICER

Mr. Jenkins, it looks to us as though you're operating a drug lab on the property. This would cause an immediate confiscation of the lot and it's belongings if we find that to be true.

A few years in prison waiting trial?  
At your age, a lifetime?

You will not discuss this with the media.  
You will find yourself a comfortable apartment in town and wait.

Is that clear?

Mel backs away, speechless.

Gets in his truck and leaves.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL AREA IN LARGER CITY - DAY

A number of cars parked in front of a nice house for a meeting.

INT. LARGE HOME - MEETING OF ABOUT 20 PEOPLE - ALL AGES

BANNER on the wall:

DOWSERS OF AMERICA  
WESTERN CHAPTER

VIRGINIA is the host, bringing the meeting to order...

VIRGINIA

To the new members and guests,  
My name is Virginia.  
I've been dowsing for over twenty nine years.

Some of you have heard about the strange story on Art Bell's program about the bottomless hole on a ranch purchased recently by Mel. He wants to know something about it.

I've copied maps of the area and thought we'd map-dowse to see what we can come up with. So if you're ready, let's get started.

A PAN of the room shows members in small groups with PENDULUMS of brass or crystal, all working with maps of Mel's property.

Members start responding...

MEMBER #1

I'm getting fifty thousand feet.

MEMBER #2

So am I, but it's not a solid reading. It's more like a barrier to block what's beyond.

--

A denser energy of sorts, like going from air to water, but it's not water.

MEMBER #3

I'm getting indication it's not man-made, nor is it a natural formation. ...odd.

One member is reacting very strongly to readings she is receiving.

MEMBER #4

It feels like a passageway of sorts. Not a well.

--

But a... a...

EXT. ELLENSBURG VILLAGE - DAY

Mel comes out of his upstairs studio apartment, crosses the street to enter the diner.

INT. DINER

Mel SEES Jack the deerhunter at the back table, nursing a cup of coffee, passively staring at it.

Mel sits across from him, Jack doesn't look well.

MEL

Hi Jack.  
You look like you seen a ghost.

Jack drops his cup, burries his face in his hands, sobbing.

MEL

Sorry Jack !

I didn't mean anything by it

--

Sorry...

Mel moves to a seat by the window.

We SEE a TV uplink van and news car go by the diner at a fast clip.

A WAITRESS brings coffee and a menu to Mel.

WAITRESS

Good Morning Mel.

I hear there was a plane crash out by your place...

Was the pilot killed ?

Anyone hurt ?

MEL

I didn't see any damage or smoke to support that...

Mel glances at a military M/P eating breakfast at the counter.

The M/P glances in Mel's direction.

WAITRESS

Prob'ly be in the news tomorrow.

Let me know when you're ready to order.

Waitress goes to another table.

Mel sips his coffee.

TIM BURKHART, about 28, young executive with a briefcase enters the diner, talks to the cashier, and gets pointed Mel's direction.

Tim walks over to Mel's table, salesman's smile, hand extended.

TIM

Mel?

Hi, may I sit down ?

(sits anyway)

My name's Tim, Tim Burkhart.

... of the Six Banners Theme Park.

You've heard of us ??

MEL

I'm a little old for the roly-coasters.



TIM

You're never too old.  
 Say -- I've heard alot about your  
 mineshaft. ... and our uh...  
 staff has come up with a fabulous plan  
 to develop the area, and all the benefits  
 that come with that. Right???  
 Know what I'm talking about ??

Tim opens a portfolio and selects a folded drawing.

TIM (cont)

This is what we had in mind...  
 Just take a look at this.

Tim opens an artist's rendition drawing, holding it up  
 for Mel to see.

Mel looks on in disbelief.

We SEE a large ride-type structure built over the pit to  
 drop thrill-seeking passengers down into the pit's  
 blackness.

A ferris wheel, and other carnival themed buildings surround  
 the area Mel remembers as his back yard.

Tim looks over the top of the drawing to get Mel's reaction.

TIM

I've drawn up an open-ended lease  
 for you to sign.  
 We can get started right away.  
 You'll have a fine new house  
 built on the back lot.  
 Paved driveway, landscaping...

Mel looks out the window, Boy is staring in at the drawing.

Tim holds it up so the boy can see.

Boy starts to tremble and back away when he sees what it  
 is..

MEL

You know there's someone out there  
 right now that's taking a  
 keen interest in the place.

TIM

No...  
 Did you sign anything?  
 Here, let me get your signature  
 on this to start the survey  
 and title transfer right away.

MEL  
 (gets up)  
 I'm gonna have to think about it.

TIM  
 Wait !

Mel puts a bill on the register for the coffee and heads out of the diner.

Tim quickly folds up his portfolio, gets up and follows Mel out onto the sidewalk.

TIM  
 I'm prepared to meet any other offer you've had...

Talk to me !

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF DINER

As Mel walks out, a Native-American Tribal Elder, DAVID ELK, approaches and speaks to Mel.

DAVID ELK  
 Mr. Mel.  
 My name is David Elk.  
 I represent the Yakima Counsel southwest of your property.

--

Our people feel the need to reclaim what was once ours, before it too becomes a tainted toy of the white man.

TIM  
 I beg your pardon.  
 We have full intentions of preserving the natural beauty of the area.

Just look at the aerial view proposals submitted by our Manhattan office.

Backing away, Mel leaves the two to argue their plans out.

Tim, fumbling with the drawings, some spilling onto the ground.

Elk remains stoic.

Another TV news van drives by at a fast clip.

A news-crew stationwagon follows, but comes to an abrupt halt near Mel as he's crossing the street.

The WOMAN REPORTER asks Mel impatiently, checking her notebook...

REPORTER

Excuse me sir...  
K.S.O.F. News Three.  
Do you know where we might  
find Mel?

MEL

I believe he's inside having breakfast.  
Why don't you let him finish his meal.  
I'm sure he'll be right out to  
talk with you in a few minutes.

Tim and David Elk are in hot debate.

The news crew parks and gets out to stretch after a long drive.

Mel crosses the street and walks to his upstairs apartment.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL

Mel enters his room.

AGENT DULLARD, dark suit, is sitting there enjoying the view from the window.

He turns to Mel.

AGENT DULLARD

Mel, my name's Agent Dullard from  
the U.S. Department of Energy at  
Hanford, about forty miles southeast  
of your property.

Thee uh... shaft you claim that's  
on your land -- would be quite valuable  
for the safe deposit of our spent nuclear  
fuels. You'd be helping the country.

It seems well below the water table  
and other concerns of the  
environmentalists to make it worth your  
while to move your business elsewhere.

We are willing to help you relocate you  
and your belongings immediately.

MEL  
How'd you get in here ??

AGENT DULLARD  
You fail to understand,  
we've been here all along.

MEL  
Do I have a choice in this ??

AGENT DULLARD  
(getting up)  
No, not really.  
Nobody ever does in the long run.

MEL  
(angry)  
I bought that property free and clear.  
Taxes all paid up.  
I'm retired.  
Never been in trouble with the law.  
Went to war for this country !  
You just can't walk up and take  
a man's life out from under him !!

Agent Dullard shrugs, puts a card on the table by the phone  
as he leaves.

AGENT DULLARD  
Check with a real estate agent  
if you like.

Let us know WHERE you decide.

... soon.

Agent Dullard shuts the door behind him.

EXT. MEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATE EVENING

Through a second floor window, we SEE Mel pacing.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Mel's on the phone.

MEL  
Art - glad I got through.  
You won't believe what's happened  
since I last called.

INT. ART BELL'S BROADCAST STUDIO - LATE NIGHT

SERIES OF CALLS:

ART BELL

Caller, you're on the air with Mel.

CALLER #1 (V.O.)

Hi Mel - can you get that attorney  
that helped [Randy Weaver] ??

He'll get your land back.

ART BELL

I may have his number.

Thank you caller.

I'll check during the break.

--

Next caller, you're on the air.

CALLER #2 (V.O.)

Mel, -- our group's all ready to  
come out to defend your property.  
Just give us the word.

We've been waiting a long time for this.

Nobody takes a man's home and  
gets away with it.

ART BELL

Thank you caller, I hope we can  
find a peaceful solution to this  
before we take sides.

--

Next caller, you're on the air.

CALLER #3 (V.O.)

Thanks, Hi Mel, I'm the producer of the program  
Strange Planet, and I've sent a crew up  
to document the unlawful takeover.

You can count on us.

Fascinating find.

MEL (V.O.)

I hope you can.

They said they'd set my shop up  
as a drug lab, but I swear, all  
I was making was herb medicines  
from Native American traditions.

CALLER #3

Don't worry about that.

We know how that works.

ART BELL  
Next caller, hello...

CALLER #4 (V.O.)  
Hey Mel -- when you get time,  
come over and see the hole in  
MY backyard, it spits out  
dead animals, string, picture tubes,  
appliances and all sorts of  
garbage. [CLICK]

ART BELL  
Thank you for your help caller.  
I hope you get a life for christmas.

--  
So Mel, how will you decide  
what to do??  
I kinda feel responsible after  
airing your first call.

MEL (V.O.)  
I don't rightly know Mr. Bell.  
This has just gotten too big  
for me to handle.

EXT. ENTRANCE ROAD TO MEL'S RANCH - DAY

High-tension CROWD. Growing in number by the minute.

Mel drives up to a large crowd of people near the entrance.

Demonstrators with signs claiming constitutional protections  
for Mel;

"3rd Amendment" [no soldier shall be in  
any house without the  
consent of the owner]

"4th Amendment" [unreasonable search  
and seizures]

"5th Amendment" [taking of property without  
due process of law]

EXT. WASHINGTON STATE CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

INT. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

An AIDE enters the office with a file.

The Governor is at his desk. Senses something's wrong.

AIDE

Sir, it looks like we got a  
problem in Ellensburg.

He lays the file open on the Governor's desk.

GOVERNOR

What's the Army doing out there !

EXT. MEL'S PROPERTY - ENTRANCE ROAD CROWD - DAY

The number of protesters is growing.

News helicopters are flying above the property line being  
challenged for airspace by FBI helicopters guarding the  
property.

NEWS CREWS interviewing the locals and their take on the  
situation.

The "Strange Planet" show has their truck on location  
taping the reporters taping the crowd taping each other.

We SEE the Old Man from the General Store dramatically  
describing the shaft of blackness to a few reporters.

One PICKETER'S sign says: "GIVE MEL THE SHAFT!"

An ATTORNEY pulls up in a chauffeured limo.

He's a large man when he steps out.  
Wearing a buckskin jacket, boots, and a Stetson hat.  
Gerry Spence type, looking for Mel.

George makes his way over to the attorney and leads him  
towards Mel through the crowd.

INSERT: Boy is watching the news coverage on the  
black & white tv in the General Store.  
Rocking slowly as he sees familiar faces.

Paul is standing behind, watching, arms  
crossed in disapproval of the commotion.

RETURN TO MEL'S PROPERTY SCENE:

Two separate groups of local INDIAN COUNCILS, The Yakimas  
and the Wenatche, are SEEN with placards to reclaim their  
sacred grounds on Mel's property.

The Six Banners Amusement Agent is spastically following  
Mel around with a contract and pen.

The energy agent Mr. Dullard is watching at a distance from behind dark sunglasses. Waiting...

The public PROTESTORS are pressed against the Army's guarded barriers chanting;

PROTESTORS  
GIVE BACK HIS LAND !!

GIVE BACK HIS LAND !!

GIVE BACK HIS LAND !!

We SEE through the crowd that the attorney has found Mel and is escorting him quickly into the limo, shutting out the themepark agent who pounds on the window in protest.

The rear passenger window rolls down and the barrel of a 357 Magnum comes out pointed at the park agent.

The agent stumbles back in retreat, dropping his pen and contract.

The window rolls back up.

We PULL BACK on the scene as more and more cars, biker groups, TV news vans, army reinforcement vehicles, an Army troop transport helicopter landing in a nearby field, all arriving to protest the takeover of Mel's hole.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLOSE-UP: CLOCK RADIO - NIGHT - BEDROOM

Radio set to AM 840. Plugged in, left on, on nightstand.

ART BELL (V.O.)  
... Well ladies and gentlemen,  
I received a fax today signed by  
our friend Mel, and what seems to  
be the end to the story of Mel's Hole.

We PULL BACK slowly to see Mel's bedroom.

Furniture slightly gone through, abandon.



ART BELL (cont)(V.O.)

Seems Mel signed a ninety-nine year lease with an unnamed party. A handsome amount to be received each month by Mel to live a comfortable life wherever he chooses. He wouldn't tell us the location...

The only other detail he passed on under the restrictions of the lease, was that at the time of his death, he wanted his ashes deposited on his property.

Need I say where...

Let's take some calls.

Hello caller, you're on the air...

We continue to PULL BACK out through the bedroom window to SEE the dark house, empty, on a moonlit night.

CALLER #1 (V.O.)

Yeah Art. Think about this...  
Mel doesn't have a fax machine.  
I think it's a FAKE!  
I think the army gave Mel his first check then tossed them both down the hole.

That's why they wouldn't tell you the location.

ART BELL (V.O.)

Thank you caller.  
You raised some good points.

Line two.

CALLER #2(V.O.)

Hello, Art?

Mel, if you're listening, watch out for oncoming cars on the way out of town.

That ninety-nine year lease sounds too good.

That's all I have to say about that.

ART BELL (V.O.)  
We'll have to wait 'til he  
checks in with us to find out.  
... next caller?

CALLER #3(V.O.)  
Art... Mel's welcome to bring his business  
down to my place. Plenty of room.  
I'd enjoy the company.  
If he calls back...

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

[SPOKEN EPILOG STARTS HERE AND THROUGH NEXT SCENE]

We SEE the old man asleep in his rocking chair, slight  
back and forth movement.

The black and white tv is on a weak station, rolling, static.

EXT. GENERAL STORE PORCH - WARM SUMMER DAY [CONT. EPILOG]

We slowly come around to view the quiet front of the  
General Store on an empty street.

We come to SEE the boy sitting against the wall, slowly  
rocking, lost in a daydream.

We then SEE his hand resting gently on Timex, who is taking  
an afternoon nap.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
In one's quiet pursuit of a little  
life, liberty, and happiness,  
the pitfalls that appear  
in our own backyards,  
can consume our very being  
to unfathomable depths...  
challenging our fragile comprehension  
of our inner worlds,  
to -- the OUTER LIMITS.

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