

# BREAKNECK RIDGE

An original screenplay by

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(15 Page Excerpt)

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EXT. OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

In the neglected house, candlelight flickers. The scratchy SOUND of a Bing Crosby 78 record drifts out to the street.

CROSBY (O.S.)

(singing)

*In dreams I kiss your hand, madame,  
Your dainty finger tips,  
And when in slumberland, madame,  
I'm begging for your lips.*

**TITLE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 8th - NEWBURGH, NY**

INT. OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

A 1920s gramophone plays the record. Surrounded by candles, RANDALL HENDERSON (28) strums a guitar along with the song.

He's soulful, tatted-up and moody.

**TITLE: RANDALL**

Randall struggles with the chords, but he's getting there.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

A CAR pulls up and a DARK FIGURE gets out.

The FIGURE opens the rusty mailbox out front and puts in an envelope. The person raises the old-style 'mail's in' flag.

LIGHTS from an approaching car cause the figure to scurry back and drive off.

INT/EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

The headlights are from a squad car. Inside it, OFFICER CHARLIE BENNET (35, muscular and crude) sees the candles burning in the house. He stops and grabs his radio.

CHARLIE

(into the mic)

Hey, Big Bertha. What say you do some work and earn your pension?

BERTHA (O.S.)

(on the radio)

Screw you, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I love you too. Look up 421 South  
Robles Street. Tell me who owns it.

BERTHA (O.S.)

Will do.

CHARLIE

Hey B. What did the leper say to  
the hooker? 'Keep the tip.'

BERTHA (O.S.)

I'm calling HR.

Charlie laughs. He shines his flashlight on the house.

INT. OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

Randall notices the light flashing across the windows and  
stops playing. He looks out and sees the cop car out front.

RANDALL

Shit.

Randall lifts the needle off the record and goes to the door.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie moves the light across the house. The radio kicks on.

BERTHA (O.S.)

Charlie, you there?

CHARLIE

Yeah. What d'ya got?

BERTHA (O.S.)

The place was owned by James G.  
Henderson. Deceased.

CHARLIE

All right. Print it out. I'll come  
get it later.

Charlie sees Randall walking out of the house toward his car.  
He shines the light in his face to stop him.

RANDALL

You mind turning that thing off?

CHARLIE  
You mind telling me what you're  
doing here? You a squatter?

RANDALL  
Nope.

CHARLIE  
How'd you get in there?

Randall pulls out a set of keys and jingles them at him.

Charlie turns off the light.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
I'll be watching you.

RANDALL  
Don't strain your eyes.

Charlie throws the car in gear and drives off.

Randall notices the flag up on the mailbox.

Opening the rusted box, he finds a bulging envelope inside  
with 'Hitman' scrawled on it. He scowls at it.

INT. OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

Randall moves with the package to a lit candle on a table. He  
opens it and finds \$1000 in hundred dollar bills.

He reads the note inside. It makes him furious.

RANDALL  
Jesus Christ.

EXT. WEST STREET - NIGHT

Charlie's police car drives down the dark, empty streets. He  
passes a homeless woman sleeping in front of a drug store.

The woman, EVELYN GILBERT (27), looks up and sees Charlie. In  
response, she curls up like a frightened armadillo.

INT./EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Seeing this, Charlie smirks. He pulls the car up near  
'Sinkers Donut Shoppe' on the corner.

He looks up at the clock above the bank. 3:55.

Charlie parks and kills the lights. He pulls out his cell phone and, from his 'favorites' list, calls up a video.

INSERT: A slick EVANGELIST (40) addresses a LARGE CROWD.

EVANGELIST

Every year, millions of dollars go unclaimed by lottery winners. Well, God has a prize for you. And it's worth more than all the money in the world. It's called 'salvation.'

EXT. SINKERS DONUT SHOP - NIGHT

FERNANDO GUERREZ (28, short and wiry) rides up to the shop on his bike. He notices the darkened cop car across the street.

He sees Charlie Bennet inside and, though upset, he fakes a friendly smile and waves to him.

INT./EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Charlie waves back, then goes back to listening to the video.

EVANGELIST (O.S.)

And to claim that prize all you have to do is say 'I'm sorry, Lord. I have sinned. And I--'

He abruptly clicks the phone off. The message unnerves him.

Charlie starts the car and drives away.

EXT. SINKERS DONUTS - NIGHT

Fernando unlocks the door to the shop and watches Charlie drive off. As the car vanishes so does his pretend smile.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Charlie pulls up behind some houses and kills his lights.

He looks at himself in the rearview mirror. He's sweaty and agitated. He mutters as he touches the crucifix on his neck.

CHARLIE

Sorry, Lord. I'm just not ready.

Getting out, he moves to the back door of a house. He slides his hand through a hole in the screen and lets himself in.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - NIGHT

Charlie moves quietly inside. He sees a box of 'Sinkers' donuts on the table. He snatches a piece of one as he goes.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Charlie enters the bedroom. A woman, MAGGIE (28), is asleep in bed. Hearing him, she starts to wake up and sit.

CHARLIE

Easy, Sweet Cheeks. It's just me.

He pops the chunk of donut in his mouth and takes off his hat. Maggie locks eyes with him as he moves toward her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Stay quiet. Y'here now?

Frightened, Maggie nods. Charlie smiles and undoes his belt.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Still furious, Randall walks up the street. He's got the note he found in the mailbox with him.

TESSA (25) spots him and leans over to her friend Claire.

TESSA

That's him. The guy I told you about. 'The Hitman.'

Claire nods and the two steer clear of Randall.

Wedged between the bank and a year-round Christmas boutique, the filthy bundle that is Evelyn sits, sadly calling out.

EVELYN

Help me. Please.

People walk by, ignoring her. Randall hurries up the block.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

I have nothing. I have no one.

RANDALL

Join the club.

Regretting the crack, Randall stops and digs a fiver out of his pocket. He puts it in her hand.

Surprised, she watches him bustle off.

EXT. SINKERS DONUTS - DAY

Randall angrily darts into the cute but pretentious joint.

INT. SINKERS DONUTS - DAY

Randall moves to the counter and shoves the note toward a very busy, Fernando who's wearing a 'Sinkers' apron.

RANDALL  
What the hell is this?

FERNANDO  
A letter?

RANDALL  
I got it last night. Read it.

Fernando looks at the note.

RANDALL (CONT'D)  
You're the only one who knows where  
to find me. So what's the deal?

FERNANDO  
Lower your voice, okay? And sit.

Randall grudgingly sits.

Evelyn enters. Counting her money, she calls to Fernando.

EVELYN  
Hey! Can I get a coffee and--

FERNANDO  
(angrily, to her)  
I told you. Don't come in here.

Dejected, she's about to go when Randall calls to her.

RANDALL  
Stay where you are.  
(to Fernando)  
Give her what she wants.

Randall glares at Fernando. He buckles. Seeing this, Evelyn moves back to the counter.

EVELYN  
A coffee and one of those cream  
filled things. Strawberry.

She meets Randall's eye and smiles. He turns away.

Fernando gets her order and hands Randall back the note.

FERNANDO

That's messed up, man. I don't know what to tell you.

RANDALL

You must've talked to someone.

FERNANDO

Nobody. I swear.

RANDALL

So did you send this?

Fernando angrily points at the hand-written menu board.

FERNANDO

Look at the menu. That's not my writing.

RANDALL

Well it looks kind of girlie so I thought it might be you. Maybe Maggie wrote it. Hey darlin'!

He waves to Maggie by the donut fryer. She looks away.

FERNANDO

Leave her alone. She doesn't want to talk to you. And neither do I.

RANDALL

You made that very clear when you kicked me out of your place.

Hearing this, Evelyn looks up from her coffee. Randall picks up the note and waves it at Fern.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

I just want to know who sent this.

FERNANDO

I have no idea. Now go. Before you scare away my customers.

RANDALL

Come on, Fatty--

FERNANDO

Nobody calls me that now. Stop it.

RANDALL

You do look nice in that apron.

FERNANDO  
Get the fuck out of here.

RANDALL  
Stop sending people my way. I'm  
done with all that. Understand?

FERNANDO  
Get out!

Randall leaves. Evelyn downs her coffee and follows him out.

EXT. WEST STREET - DAY

Fuming, Randall moves down the street. He's unaware that Evelyn has run out and is right behind him.

EVELYN  
Hey.  
(yelling at his back)  
HEY!

RANDALL  
(stopping)  
What do you want?

EVELYN  
I wanted to say thanks. For the  
money and for helping me out.

RANDALL  
You're welcome.

Randall moves on. Evelyn follows.

EVELYN  
That guy. Is he your friend?

RANDALL  
He's a pretentious prick. Him and  
his 'artisanal' baked goods.

EVELYN  
Yeah. He's a jerk. But he makes a  
good donut.

Randall keeps walking and she keeps following.

EVELYN (CONT'D)  
You said you're homeless. How come  
you're so clean?

RANDALL  
I'm not homeless.

EVELYN  
You're not?

RANDALL  
No. I have a house. A big place.

EVELYN  
Where?

RANDALL  
Look. Leave me alone. I got a lot  
to do.

Randall walks into an office by the drug store.

Evelyn sits outside, not giving up.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

In an office above the drug store, Randall angrily confronts  
DORIS KAPPELHOFF (60, tough but sincere) seated at her desk.

RANDALL  
Why can't I sell it? What's the God  
damn hold up?

DORIS  
You still have back taxes to pay.

RANDALL  
I thought you took care of that!

DORIS  
You need to calm down. And sit. Or  
this meeting is over.

Randall angrily drops in a chair. Doris looks at his file.

DORIS (CONT'D)  
The back taxes on the house came to  
\$25,000. I was able to pay \$18,000  
of it after I settled the estate.  
And after I collected my fee. You  
still owe them \$7000.

RANDALL  
I ain't got anything close to that.

Closing the file, she looks at him.

DORIS

I figured. So I have some thoughts. You could take out a mortgage on the place and pay it that way. But to qualify you have to get a job.

RANDALL

I can't get a job.

DORIS

Right. I guess nobody around here wants to hire 'The Hitman.'

RANDALL

That's right

DORIS

Can you blame them? We've all had it with the guns and the killing.

RANDALL

(wearily)  
Don't start.

DORIS

You know I lost a cousin in that movie theater shooting.

RANDALL

I had nothing to do with that.

DORIS

That's not the point. It has to stop! And we're going to keep marching 'til it does.

She gestures to a poster on her wall. It reads: 'STOP THE VIOLENCE. MARCH ON JULY 27TH.'

DORIS (CONT'D)

We only had a few hundred people that time. But we have a much bigger march coming this summer.

RANDALL

Good for you. Now how the hell am I gonna pay off these assholes?

DORIS

If you want to get work try looking in North Windsor. Or at the mall.

RANDALL

I don't want a job. I just want to sell the place and get out of here.

DORIS

Okay. That brings us to option number two. Get some insurance.

RANDALL

What? Why?

DORIS

You buy the insurance. Then you get a can of gas and a match and your worries are over. But you didn't hear me say that.

Randall gets up to go.

RANDALL

Thanks for nothing.

DORIS

These days lots of folks are doing 'option number two.' For a small fee I can hook you up with a guy--

RANDALL

I am not burning down my Grandfather's house.

DORIS

I just figured with your 'history' you might be open to it.

EXT. WEST STREET - DAY

Randall storms out the door. Evelyn jumps up and takes chase.

EVELYN

So where is it?

RANDALL

Where's what?

EVELYN

Your place. You said you had one.

He stops and faces her.

RANDALL

Why do you keep bothering me?

EVELYN

You gave me five bucks. And you seem nice.

RANDALL

I'm not nice. Ask anybody.

He starts to walk away. She follows.

EVELYN

I don't want more money. I can't keep sleeping on the street.

RANDALL

Go away. I got enough problems.

She rushes in front of him, blocking him.

EVELYN

I won't be a problem. I just need a place to crash. And a shower.

She anxiously clutches an odd amulet around her neck.

RANDALL

What's that?

EVELYN

Never mind. Are you gonna help me or not?

He looks at the pathetic creature and surrenders.

RANDALL

I guess so. Sure.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - DAY

Randall walks up to the house with Evelyn trailing behind.

EVELYN

This is it? You own this?

RANDALL

Yup. But not for long.

INT. OLD HOUSE - DAY

They enter the rundown relic. Unlit candles are everywhere.

RANDALL

The water's cold. And there's no electric. You can sleep upstairs. There's a bed. No sheets though.

EVELYN

'No sheets' is fine.

RANDALL

Shower's upstairs too.

Randall locks the door. Seeing that, Evelyn gets nervous.

EVELYN

Hey. Don't lock the door. Okay?

RANDALL

Okay.

He unlocks it and shoots her a 'how's that' look.

Relieved, she moves upstairs.

Once she's out of sight Randall takes the offending note out of his pocket and reads it again.

INSERT: 'A thousand up front. Another four when it's done.'

His eyes land on the last line: 'I want him dead.'

Randall stares at this, then stashes the note in a cupboard.

INT. OLD HOUSE (BATHROOM) - DAY

Evelyn strips down and gets in the old claw tub. Eager to rinse several months of grime off, she turns on the shower.

Ice cold water hits her and she SCREAMS!

EVELYN

AAHH! Shit! God dammit!

INT. OLD HOUSE (BEDROOM) - DAY

Randall's readying the bedroom when he hears her SCREAMING.

RANDALL

What? What happened?

He rushes toward the bathroom.

INT. OLD HOUSE (BATHROOM) - DAY

Randall yanks open the door. He sees Evelyn in the shower.

EVELYN

The water's fucking freezing!

Randall stands frozen in place, staring at her.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

Take a picture. It'll last longer.

Randall averts his eyes and backs out of the room.

RANDALL

Sorry. There's clothes in the  
bedroom. Take whatever you need.

He closes the door. Evelyn goes back to scrubbing off the  
grime and shivering.

EXT. SINKERS DONUTS - DAY

Carrying groceries, Maggie walks toward the shop. Doris feeds  
the meter by her car and she sees her.

DORIS

Maggie! Hey Maggie.

Not happy to see her, Maggie stops. Doris moves to her side.

MAGGIE

Hello Mrs. Kappelhoff.

DORIS

Hi. Whatever happened with that  
harassment thing you came to me  
about?

MAGGIE

I-- uh-- decided it would be best  
if we just worked it out ourselves.  
I don't want to make things worse  
by getting lawyers involved.

DORIS

Did you get a security camera like  
I told you?

MAGGIE

I ordered one. Yes. Thanks.

Maggie tries to walk off, but Doris stays close by.

DORIS

Good. Get some evidence so we can swear out a complaint.

MAGGIE

No. I need to handle this myself.

DORIS

Don't be scared. I can make this creep stop bothering you. But you have to tell me who he is?

MAGGIE

I-- I'd rather not. Thanks.

Maggie rushes into the donut shop. Doris remains concerned.

INT. OLD HOUSE (BEDROOM)- DAY

Wearing a towel, Evelyn opens the bedroom closet and grabs a flannel shirt and jeans off their hangers.

She notices a high powered AR 556 rifle in the closet. All the while another Bing Crosby 78 plays downstairs.

CROSBY (O.S.)

(singing)

*You came to me  
from out of nowhere,  
You took my heart  
and found it free.*

INT. OLD HOUSE - DAY

Randall's sitting in a very worn leather chair. He strums his guitar along with the Crosby record.

Evelyn comes downstairs. She's wearing a gigantic flannel shirt and man-size jeans. They're rolled up and tucked in.

EVELYN

That shower was cold as shit. But thanks. And thanks for the loan of your stuff.

RANDALL

That's not mine. That's Big Jim's.

EVELYN

'Big' is right. Look at this.

She pulls the shirt out, like a tent. Randall smiles.