

Flicker Pilot: "12:47"

Written By

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***. FADE IN:

1. EXT. AMBUSH SPOT - AFTERNOON

AARON breathes hard. He looks at THOMAS and JAMES. Thomas stands stock still, expression hard. James looks terrified.

They are surrounded by a semi-circling of 4 thugs armed with blunt weapons.

Thomas slowly reaches behind his back. Looks at Aaron.

BANDIT BOSS
Don't move another inch.

CUT TO:

2. EXT. WOODS - DAY

Aaron (25), James (26), and Thomas (25) are hiking through fairly thick underbrush. Aaron pushes aside a sapling which SNAPS back almost hitting James in the face.

JAMES
Hey, watch it, man!

James is a skinny, short guy with wild blond hair and pale blue eyes. Despite two weeks in the woods, his chin barely sports stubble. He steps around the sapling, a scowl on his face.

Aaron is tall and athletic with tan skin and light brown hair. He glances back, his two weeks of beard growth almost hiding a grin.

AARON
Didn't see you there.

JAMES
Funny. That's the third time you
"haven't seen" me in the two weeks
we've been in this insect-infested
hell.

Thomas walks behind them, smiling slightly, but staying out of it. He is two inches taller than Aaron, but not as wiry. His skin is as dark as his Kenyan grandfather's. His usually neat beard has branched out a bit in the last two weeks.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Are you sure we're not lost?

Aaron rolls his eyes.

AARON
Positive.

JAMES
I wish I'd brought my GPS.

AARON
You don't trust me?

James turns around to Thomas.

JAMES
Remind me to never let him convince
us to do this again.

Thomas makes a silent OK sign.

AARON (O.S.)
See, here's the path. We'll be back
in a few minutes.

3. EXT. AARON'S CAR - DAY

The path empties into a clearing next to a dirt road. In the middle of the clearing sits Aaron's SUV.

James runs up to the car and FLOPS himself down face first on the hood, arms spread out in a kind of embrace.

JAMES
Ah! Blessed technology. Gears and
wires, the savior of modern
humanity.

Aaron and Thomas share a glance before walking up to the SUV.

AARON
Don't be so dramatic.

Aaron pulls his keys out of his pocket and pushes the unlock button on the key fob. Nothing happens. He hits the button again. Nothing again, so he unlocks the car manually.

He pushes the unlock switch on the door, but again, nothing.

AARON
That's weird.

Thomas leans over his shoulder.

THOMAS
What's up?

AARON

Not sure.

James YANKS the handle on the other side of the SUV.

JAMES

Come on man, open the door.

AARON

I'm trying.

James comes around to look.

JAMES

What do you mean you're trying?

Aaron pushes the switch again to no avail. Then he sticks the key in the ignition and twists.

NOTHING.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You've got to be kidding me. Did you leave the lights on or something?

AARON

(uncertain)

No. No, of course not.

JAMES

Then why's your car dead?

Aaron doesn't answer. James PUSHES past him to open the glove box and retrieve his smart phone.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Forget it. I'll just call Triple A.

James hold down the button to turn on his phone. Nothing.

Aaron and Thomas laugh.

AARON

Now look who left something on.

James looks disconcerted.

JAMES

No way. I made sure it was off when we left. (to Thomas) Remember, I made a point of it.

Thomas shrugs.

THOMAS
It was two weeks ago.

Aaron gets his phone out and starts to turn it on.

AARON
No problem. I'll just call and...

His phone doesn't turn on. The three stop and look at each other silently for a moment.

AARON
So what's the likelihood we both forgot to turn off our phones?

Silence responds.

4. EXT. ABOVE AARON'S CAR - DAY

The guys look small in the large clearing. The sounds of birds and cicadas are almost deafening.

5. EXT. AARON'S CAR - DAY

James grabs his and Aaron's phones. He holds the on button on both down and paces.

JAMES
Come on. Come on. There's no way.

James WHACKS his phone on the car. Aaron snatches his back.

AARON
Very IT of you, James. Just bang on it and it'll work eventually.

JAMES
I've got to try something, Aaron. We're stranded out here in the middle of nowhere.

AARON
We're not stranded. There was a house three miles down the road. We'll stop in and call for help.

JAMES
I am not walking three more miles. We've been hiking for two weeks.

Aaron tosses his backpack in the car. Aaron walks away.

AARON
Just consider it an extension of
(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)

the adventure. We won't even need
our packs.

Thomas ditches his bag and begins to follow Aaron.

JAMES

You're not seriously going along
with this are you?

Thomas keeps walking.

THOMAS

Got a better plan?

James stands alone, his cellphone in both hands, as his
friends walk away. He looks around, ditches his pack, and
then runs after them.

BLACKOUT.

***. END OF ACT ONE

***. ACT TWO

6. ----OMITTED----

7. EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - EVENING

The guys approach the Abandoned House. A sign out front says
"Stay Away." James points it out.

JAMES

(hopeful)

Reverse psychology?

The other two walk up to the front door. James trails
behind.

Thomas places his face up against the window.

THOMAS

Jeez, it's been trashed.

Aaron checks the door and it pulls open, unlocked. He walks
in.

8. INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - EVENING

The inside of the house has been almost stripped clean and
what's left is strewn all around the floor.

AARON

Hello?

Thomas walks down the hall. Aaron heads for the kitchen. James walks into the living room.

James flips the light switch and tries to turn them on, but still nothing. He glances at the analog clock. The hands are frozen at 12:47. He looks down at his own watch.

Aaron comes back out of the kitchen and walks up to Thomas.

AARON

I don't think anyone's home. It's been pretty stripped down back there too.

JAMES

Guys...

THOMAS

Looks like the place has been ransacked.

JAMES

Guys...

AARON

Yeah. I wonder what on earth happened h-

JAMES

GUYS!

Thomas and Aaron turn to James. He gestures wildly to his watch.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Thomas, what does your watch say?

Thomas checks his digital watch and then frowns.

THOMAS

Huh. It's dead. I wonder when-

JAMES

Aaron, yours?

Aaron glances and then does a double take. He glances outside where the sun is going down.

AARON

12:47, but that doesn't make any sense.

James points at the clock on the wall.

JAMES

That's what mine says and what that one says. Our clocks all stopped at the same time.

THOMAS

Wait. What is that supposed to mean?

JAMES

Look around. There's no electricity here. Our watches are dead. Our phones are dead. The car's dead. What if those things are connected?

James waves his hand like he's waiting for it to sink in for the others.

AARON

So, maybe someone hit a power line.

JAMES

Do you really think that would cause your watch battery to die?

AARON

I don't know, man. You're the techie.

THOMAS

Just tell us what you're getting at.

James paces.

JAMES

There's only one thing that could kill all of these at the exact same moment. (Beat) An electromagnetic pulse.

Aaron laughs nervously.

AARON

An EMP? Seriously? Come on, are those even real? What could cause that?

James takes the question seriously.

JAMES

Well, the most likely would be--

James is interrupted by an off screen woman's SCREAM.

Aaron and Thomas run out of the building following the sound.

9. EXT. WOODS BEHIND THE HOUSE - DAY

Aaron runs through the woods with Thomas right on his heels. They stop short, looking around.

AARON

Where did that come from?

Another SCREAM answers him. The guys run toward the sound.

10. EXT. LARGE TREE - DAY

Amber, a petite blonde woman is up a tree, clinging to it for dear life. She sees the guys.

AMBER

Help me.

AARON

What's wrong. Are you stuck?

AMBER

N-no. There was a b-bear.

Aaron and Thomas are immediately on the alert. They scan the area. Nothing.

AARON

I think it's gone. Can you get down?

AMBER

I think so.

Amber climbs down shakily. Close to the bottom, her grip fails and she falls. Aaron catches her.

AARON

Woah. Are you okay.

Amber suddenly hugs Aaron. Aaron looks up at a bemused Thomas. Aaron carefully peels the woman from his chest.

AARON (CONT'D)

Hey, why don't you come back with us. We'll take care of you.

Amber nods and wipes away tears.

11. INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - EVENING

Aaron opens the door and leads Amber inside.

AARON
See, it's safe here.

Amber GASPS. Aaron looks up.

Two large THUGS have cornered James in the back. They are carrying baseball bats.

Aaron steps forward.

AARON (CONT'D)
Hey!

The men look back at him.

AARON
Why don't you guys just get what you want and go?

The thugs look at each other. Then they pick up packages of food and start to leave. One thug eyes Amber, until Aaron steps in front of her. The thugs exit.

Thomas steps in and locks the doors.

AMBER
What on earth is going on?

James steps forward.

JAMES
I was guessing an EMP.

AARON
Not now, James. We need to decide what to do.

Aaron walks over and looks out the window at the setting sun.

AARON
I think we should stay here the night and then walk back to Thomas's house in the morning, since he's the closest.

JAMES
And if those freaks with the bats come back looking for more?

Aaron turns away from them.

AARON
Then we run away. Fast.

Amber stands awkwardly by the doors. She looks out the window and then turns to Aaron

AMBER
Hey, I know I just met you guys,
but can I join you, for just a
little while? My house was
ransacked.

AARON
Of course. We don't mind. What's
your name, by the way?

Amber holds out her hand and Aaron takes it.

AMBER
Amber.

AARON
I'm Aaron. Nice to meet you Amber.

BLACKOUT.

***. END OF ACT TWO

***. ACT THREE

12. EXT. ROAD TO THOMAS' HOUSE - DAY

It's daytime again, and the group trudges along the side of the road. They look sleep-deprived, and James' hair is wilder than normal. Amber walks close to Aaron.

JAMES
I cannot believe we are walking to
your house, Thomas.

THOMAS
It's six miles away, and we're
probably more than halfway back
already.

AARON
Don't worry, you'll be back in time
for *Doctor Who*.

JAMES
Not if there really has been an
(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

EMP.

AARON

Oh, stop with the EMP nonsense.
It's impossible. Don't you think
we'd have noticed something big
enough to knock out all the power.

JAMES

Not necessarily. It could have been
hours away. An EMP from a nuclear
blast could spread for hundreds of
miles.

AARON

A nuke? Well, why didn't it effect
us then?

James stares at Aaron.

JAMES

You know nothing about EMPs do you?
EMPs are mostly harmless to humans.
They only mess with electrical
currents.

THOMAS

Mostly?

JAMES

I mean, if you had a Pacemaker or
something like that, it would
probably short circuit and kill
you, but other than that...

AARON

So, potentially thousands of people
with Pacemakers just dropped dead
at the same moment our watches
stopped.

JAMES

Well, yeah, if you want to go with
the worst case scenario.

AMBER

I'm sorry, but do we have to talk
about this?

AARON

No. We don't.

Aaron shoots a sharp glance at James. James rolls his eyes.

AARON (CONT'D)
Do you have any family in the area,
Amber? Maybe we could help you
find them.

AMBER
My closest family is in D.C. I
don't even want to think about what
it's like in big cities right now.

James and Thomas walk a few yards ahead of Amber and Aaron.
James leans over close to Thomas.

JAMES
Why is she even here?

THOMAS
What, were we just supposed to tell
her to leave?

JAMES
I guess not, but what kind of girl
is willing to tag along with a
bunch of guys?

THOMAS (O.S.)
A desperate one.

13. EXT. ABOVE THE ROAD - DAY
The group nears a fork in the road.

14. EXT. FORK IN THE ROAD - DAY
Thomas gestures toward the left fork.

THOMAS
Left turn here. We're probably only
about half an hour away.

JAMES
Thank God. I need to put my feet
up.

Aaron comes up and softly punches James on the shoulder.

AARON
You are such a wuss.

JAMES
I will (beat) not deny that. I'm a
man of simple pleasures.

Amber LAUGHS and Aaron relaxes.

DISSOLVE TO:

15. EXT. THOMAS' HOUSE - DAY

The group arrive at a modest two-story brick house. It appears intact.

AARON

Looks like the looters haven't found this place yet.

Thomas goes up to the door and unlocks it.

THOMAS

I'm just looking forward to seeing Anita and Felicia.

16. INT. THOMAS' HOUSE - DAY

Thomas walks inside his dark house. He steps by a table with a family picture (Thomas embracing his young wife, a white woman with black hair, and their baby girl).

He calls out--

THOMAS

Anita?

Nothing. He moves quickly, opening doors, checking.

Aaron comes in behind him.

AARON

Are they here?

Thomas ignores him.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Anita! (quieter) Babe?

Thomas runs up the stairs.

17. INT. THOMAS' HOUSE NURSERY - DAY

Thomas' head pops in. A crib sits empty surrounded by pink toys. But no one is there.

18. INT. THOMAS' HOUSE BEDROOM - DAY

Thomas walks into his bedroom. The bed is still made. But the room is empty. The house is empty.

Thomas walks over to the window which overlooks the backyard. No family.

19. INT. THOMAS' HOUSE FOYER - DAY

Thomas comes down the stairs to where the others gathered. His eyes are wide as he sweeps the room over their heads on last time.

AARON
Hey, what's up, man?

THOMAS
I'm not sure. Actually, you know, I bet they went over to Mr. Martin's next door. You guys hang out here. Eat whatever's fresh. I'll be back in a bit.

Thomas exits out the front door. The others stand still until James shrugs and heads for the kitchen.

20. INT. THOMAS' KITCHEN - DAY

James wanders over to the fridge. Aaron and Amber stand behind him. James opens the fridge and recoils.

JAMES
Gah! Don't go in there. Not good.

Aaron laughs and searches the cupboards. He pulls out a half-eaten bag of Cheetos. He opens it and offers some to Amber. She waves her hand. Aaron shrugs and starts eating.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I wonder where Anita and the kid are.

AARON
(mouth full)
They probably did go over to the old fart's house. He's got an arsenal doesn't he? A good place to go in an apocalypse.

JAMES
Are you starting to warm to my EMP theory?

AARON
Nope.

Amber stand by the stove. She crosses her arms tightly.

AMBER
But something weird is happening
right?

AARON
Yeah maybe, but come on, guys.
Maybe we're just overreacting.
Maybe it's not that bad.

James and Amber stare at Aaron.

JAMES
Hey maybe we should have followed
Thomas. Bad things always happen in
horror movies when people split up.

AARON
We're not in a horror movie. (beat)
But yeah, sure, let's go find him.

The group heads out of the kitchen.

21. EXT. PATH TO GEORGE'S HOUSE - DAY

Aaron leads the way down a narrow path between Thomas' and
his neighbor's house.

JAMES
How far away does this guy live?

AARON
It's right over here.

22. EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DAY

A small brick house appears between the trees. An older man
sits on the front porch. He carves a piece of wood with
shaky hands. He looks up when the group approaches.

AARON
Hey George. How ya been?

GEORGE
You here for Thomas?

They nod. George stands up and sets aside his carving.

GEORGE
He's around back. You might want to
leave him alone for a bit longer.

Aaron and James look at each other worried.

AARON
Is he okay. What happened to Anita
and Felicia?

THOMAS (O.S.)
They're gone.

The group turn toward is voice as Thomas appears from around the corner of the house. He looks like he's aged ten years. He doesn't say anything, but walks into George's house.

Aaron looks at George in question. George sits back down again.

GEORGE
When the lights went out, Anita was driving home. She couldn't see the turn and flipped the car into a tree. I found them the next day. Nothing I could do, but give 'em a proper burial.

AARON
Oh God. Thomas.

Aaron runs inside.

23. INT. GEORGE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Thomas is rummaging around in George's cupboards. Arron comes in.

AARON
What are you doing?

Thomas pulls a bottle from a cupboard and starts to unscrew the lid. Aaron reaches for it. Thomas yanks it away, protectively.

AARON (CONT'D)
Don't do this, man. I know you.
You'll try to avoid feeling this.
But you can't.

THOMAS
It hurts.

AARON
I know.

THOMAS
I lost them. I can't (beat) I just...

Aaron stand there silently, waiting.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
I just want to hurt something.

AARON
Don't make it you.

Thomas puts aside the bottle.

AARON
Come on.

THOMAS
Where?

AARON
Back to your house. Remember what
we did when your dad passed?

THOMAS
The fire?

AARON
Yeah. It helped right?

Thomas nods. Aaron claps his arm around Thomas and lead him away.

24. EXT. THOMAS' HOUSE - NIGHT

An enormous log lands on a blazing bon fire with an explosion of sparks.

Thomas and Aaron sit side by side. James and Amber sit on opposite sides farther away.

AARON
Tell me about them.

THOMAS
They were (beat) my life. Or, they
made it worth living.

AARON
What was your happiest moment with
them?

Thomas puts his head into his hands. The fire flickers off the tears that streak down his face. When he brings his hands away, he's smiling.

THOMAS
When Felicia was born. Anita was in
(MORE)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

labor for 15 hours. But when she held her baby, she wanted another one right then.

Thomas stands up.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I'll be right back.

He walks toward his house.

25. INT. THOMAS' HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Thomas stands in the doorway of his house illuminated by the bonfire outside the window.

He walks over to his bed and sits down on it. He picks up a picture in a frame and holds it in his lap.

THOMAS

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have left you behind. I-I didn't know.

Thomas pulls the picture out of the frame. Then he stands.

He leaves the the picture frame on the bedside table next to a small pocket BIBLE and a cross NECKLACE. Thomas turns to go, but stops.

He looks up at the ceiling and then turns back. He gingerly picks up the necklace and Bible and put them into his pocket with the picture.

26. EXT. THOMAS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Thomas joins Aaron at the bon fire.

AARON

Are you alright?

THOMAS

No. But I will be.

The fire flickers in Thomas' eyes until he closes them.

27. INT. THOMAS LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Thomas' eyes open. Aaron stands over him.

AARON

Hey man, we wanted to talk about what our next steps will be.

Thomas gets up and follows Aaron.

28. INT. THOMAS' KITCHEN - MORNING

James and Amber are eating cereal out of the bag.

JAMES

Hey, you want some dry cereal? I'd offer milk, but it's very spoiled.

THOMAS

George said that the power has been off for two weeks.

The others look at each other.

AARON

I don't think we can stay here for much longer. We're going to run out of food quickly.

JAMES

So where do we go?

AARON

I don't kn--

A GUNSHOT sounds in the distance.

THOMAS

Mr. Martin!

Thomas and Aaron run.

29. EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DAY

Aaron and Thomas sprint out of the woods. A dead body on the ground a few feet from the porch attracts their attention. It's muscular arms bulge from its tank top. Not George.

George sits on his porch step. He holds a cloth over his bleeding thigh.

GEORGE

Don't worry about me boys. I've had worse in the war.

James and Amber catch up and notice the body.

JAMES

What happened?

GEORGE

Fool thought he could threaten me on my own land. (beat) Go get me that gun.

Aaron picks up the handgun from the dead man's hand. He brings it to George. George holds it out to him again.

GEORGE

Take it.

Aaron stands frozen.

GEORGE

You need to be prepared, because this is a whole new world. It will kill you if you're not careful.

Aaron carefully takes the gun.

GEORGE

There's going to be people out there who will take advantage of this situation. Shoot them.

Everyone looks surprised.

GEORGE

Don't look at me like that. It'll be them or you, and you better make sure it's you.

Aaron sticks his gun into the back waistband of his pants.

GEORGE

There's nothing left here. You should go to the National Guard outpost out east. They might help.

The others look at each other and nod.

AARON

Are you going to be okay?

George snorts.

GEORGE

Don't you worry about me, boy. Stay safe, and God speed.

DISSOLVE TO:

30. EXT. THOMAS' FAMILY'S GRAVES - DAY

Thomas stands over the fresh graves of his wife and daughter marked with simple wooden cross. He holds the Bible and necklace in his hands.

Aaron comes up behind him.

AARON

You ready?

Thomas nods and turns around. He walks away, the graves growing smaller behind him. His face is stony.

31. EXT. AMBUSH SPOT - DAY

Thomas and Aaron join Amber and James. Aaron pulls out a map of Virginia, criss-crossed with roads. He points at a spot in the Appalachian Mountains.

AARON

We're here.

Aaron draws a line half-way across the state.

AARON (CONT'D)

And this is where we need to go.

JAMES

That's going to take a while.

Aaron folds up the map and puts it away.

AARON

Probably a few weeks.

JAMES

Great. Guess we'd better get go--

AMBER

Guys, shush. I hear something.

They all stand frozen. Rustling comes from the trees around them. Suddenly a group of rough-looking men emerge from the trees.

A Bandit Boss steps forward holding a sledgehammer.

BANDIT BOSS

Give us your packs.

Aaron breathes hard. He looks at Thomas and James. Thomas stands stock still, expression hard. James looks terrified.

They are surrounded by thugs armed with blunt weapons.

Thomas slowly reaches behind his back. Looks at Aaron.

BANDIT BOSS (CONT'D)

Don't move another inch.

While the Boss looks at Thomas Aaron pulls out the gun. The

man takes a step back.

BANDIT BOSS (CONT'D)
Wha-what are you going to do with
that?

Aaron sweats. His finger hovers over the trigger.

BLACKOUT.

The gun BANGS.

32. INT. SMOKEY ROOM - DAY

SOMEONE wearing cufflinks holds a file with Amber's photo in it. "Classified" is stamped at the top of the page. A door opens off screen.

The Someone puts down the file on a end table next to a smoking cigar.

A large AGENT in a leather jacket stands in the doorway.

AGENT
We found her.

BLACKOUT.

END