

**PROLOGUE.
THE CIRCLE OPENS.**

Sally. Wake up now, Sally.

...lemme... lemme alone...

Wake up! You got to wake up!

**CALIFORNIA. SOMEWHERE IN THE DESERT.
CHARLIE AND SALLY CAMPION.**

...what is it, Charlie, what's wrong?

You got to get dressed, honey! You got to get Baby LaVon, and we got to get outta here!

Why, is it...? Was there a fire?

Sally, honey, *don't* ask questions--you just get Baby LaVon dressed so we can hurry up and go--

I got to test the wind, see how much time we got--

Sally Campion knew what leaving in the middle of the night meant.

AWOL. Charlie was going AWOL and taking her and LaVon with him.



Won't they...?
Won't they send
soldiers after
us?

Not
tonight they
won't.

Wind's
blowing east
to west. Thank
God for that.



~cough~

~cough~



Was there an
accident?



Oh, Jesus,
Mary, and Joseph,
there *was*, wasn't
there? An accident.
Out there.



I was playing
solitaire. I looked
up and saw the clock
had gone from green
to red. I turned on
the monitor. Sally,
they're all...

...D-E-A-D
down there.



What was it exactly?

I dunno, I don't want to know, but it kil... K-I-L-L-E-D them quick.



If I'd looked up even thirty seconds later, I'd be shut up in that tower control room right now, like a bug in a bottle...



Sally took one final look at the bungalow they'd lived in for the last three years.

They were leaving their entire lives behind.



If the base gates are closed, I'm gonna crash through.

Wind's blowing west. We're going east.

It's going to be all right, hon.



By dawn, they would be riding east across Nevada, and Charlie would be coughing steadily.

END PROLOGUE.

ARNETTE, TEXAS.

BILL HAPSCOMB'S
TEXACO STATION
ON ROUTE 93.



