

**AFTERWORLD**

*Episode 25: "The First Horseman"*

FADE IN:

BEGIN TITLE SEQUENCE...

We hear NARRATION over BLACK.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.)  
My name is Russell Shoemaker. I was  
an advertising executive.

CLOSE ON SHOE'S FACE (before "The Fall") looking clean-cut,  
and wide-eyed. Sexy, iconic TECHNOLOGY IMAGES -- computer,  
cell phones, etc. -- drift through the frame like visions of  
sugarplums dancing in Shoe's head.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I sold technology to the world.  
Back when there was technology...  
and people to sell it to.

As the tech images EVAPORATE AND VANISH, we see Shoe's face  
undergo a TIME LAPSE aging transformation, through several  
"looks" (long hair, beard, etc.) until he becomes the iconic  
hero of the future. HERO SHOEMAKER speaks now to the camera:

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
This is my story...

Shoe's face/head darkens and MORPHS INTO THE EARTH (as seen  
from near-orbit) with its panoply of TWINKLING LIGHTS. Shoe's  
voice now returns to narration:

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
How I survived life after "The Fall."

The twinkling lights suddenly BLINK OUT as the planet is  
overtaken by some unseen global blackout. A beat, then the  
dark planet is backlit/eclipsed by a BRILLIANT LIGHT that  
SEARS A HOLE in the center of the black orb...

We rapidly PULL BACK to see that this fiery "doughnut" shape  
has become the "O" in the show's title -- "AFTERWORLD."

END TITLE SEQUENCE.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON SHOE'S JOURNAL flipping open to the next handwritten entry with the title: "THE FIRST HORSEMAN"

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The realization I was unprepared for  
my journey was finally sinking in...

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING reveals a long, empty highway. FIND Shoe walking parallel to the road, a safe distance from sight. As it starts to RAIN, Shoe pulls on his coat hood...

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Wasn't just that a bad can of pork  
'n beans had nearly killed me... My  
whole state of mind was bad.

Further up the highway, Shoe ducks under a GAS STATION overhang. He's soaking wet and looking miserable. He checks a wall-posted local MAP, spots a MALL in the vicinity --

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Leaving New York I was so naive... If  
I'd known what the trip would demand  
of me... Let's just say my ignorance  
was a virtue. For a while anyway.

LONG SHOT -- From an UNKNOWN POV we see Shoe head towards the WESTMONT MALL, a four-story structure in a vast parking lot.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Once I knew what it took to survive,  
though -- skill and wits -- I lost  
whatever confidence I had.

REVEAL the watcher is HORSEMAN #1.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Decided it was time to change my  
image. The way others saw me. Way  
I saw myself...

Outside the mall, Shoe sees a BILLBOARD of a man in a business suit strutting past some poorly-dressed shlubs. The tag-line reads: "*Dress For Success At The Westmont Mall!*"

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Perception is reality. And by all  
appearances, I was just another useless  
remnant of a lost civilization.

INSIDE THE MALL -- Guided by FLASHLIGHT, Shoe makes his way across a first floor promenade soaked with PUDDLES. Shoe's light PANS to the CEILING where we see RAIN WATER leaking in.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Figured if I looked like a survivor,  
maybe I'd convince others I wasn't a  
man to be trifled with.

A DEPARTMENT STORE -- Shoe enters a changing room wearing  
his CASUAL CHIC ATTIRE (corduroys, loafers, crew-neck, etc.)

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Maybe I'd even convince myself...

QUICK CUT: Shoe exits the changing room, now sporting more  
PRACTICAL ATTIRE (jeans, slicker, boots, etc.) As Shoe stands  
before a mirror, admiring his rugged new look --

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Unfortunately, the latest outdoor gear  
might make your travels safer. But it  
won't save your life...

CLOSE ON SHOE, he tenses at the SOUND OF SPURS JINGLING.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Not from an assassin.

REVEAL HORSEMAN #1 riding into Menswear, scanning the store.

BACK TO SHOE, he slips behind a SALE RACK. He hears HANGERS  
CLICKING -- WHIP PAN to reveal a man hiding nearby. This is  
JEFF, 40s, a bald, chubby businessman; he whispers on camera:

JEFF  
Sorry, man. You're on your own.

ON THE HORSEMAN, approaching the rack. He draws a SERRATED  
KNIFE. But just as he is about to yank the rack over --

-- Jeff bolts one direction, drawing the Horseman's attention  
long enough for... Shoe to escape the other direction!

SHOEMAKER (V.O.)  
Couldn't blame Jeff -- just gave me a  
dose of my own medicine. And he wasn't  
the one who stole JD's polaroid...

FIRST FLOOR -- Shoe runs to an EXIT, pushes frantically on  
the doors... but they have been CHAINED CLOSED ON THE OUTSIDE!  
The Horseman's taunting LAUGHTER echoes in the mall...

PICK UP SHOE running to a DIRECTORY KIOSK. His finger finds  
a Sporting Goods store. As Shoe takes off --

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Thought I'd covered my tracks out of  
Pennsylvania pretty well...

FLASHCUTS: Shoe dousing a CAMPFIRE... covering up FOOTPRINTS.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Just one more thing I had to learn to  
do better. If I wanted to stay alive.

INSIDE SPORTING GOODS -- Shoe goes right to the HUNTING  
SECTION, homes in on a CROSSBOW on display...

FIRST FLOOR -- The Horseman exits the Department Store on  
his mount. He cocks his head upwards at a FAINT SOUND --

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
It's hard to know what's inside you...

FOURTH FLOOR -- Shoe peers nervously through the crossbow's  
sights. Sweat stings his eyes, his hand trembles.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
...who you really are. 'Til circumstances  
beyond your control reveal your strengths.

SHOE'S POV (THRU SIGHTS) -- THE HORSEMAN walks his mount up  
the escalator. SFX: The *shhhft* of the arrow released. Now  
WE SEE the arrow bounce harmlessly off the escalator handrail.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
And your weaknesses.

CLOSE ON the Horseman, who locks fiery eyes with Shoe --

Shoe drops his crossbow and bolts to an EMERGENCY EXIT DOOR!

SMASHCUT TO:

A DOOR bursts open! Shoe barrels breathlessly onto the mall  
rooftop. The rain is really pounding now. LIGHTNING strikes.

CLOSE ON SHOE as he looks around -- nowhere to run. But  
here comes the sound of FOOTFALL up the stairs...

FOLLOW SHOE as he starts backing away from the door -- CRUNCH!  
His foot breaks through the ROTTING ROOFTOP as --

-- THE HORSEMAN emerges onto the rooftop on foot. His  
SERRATED KNIFE GLINTS with another strike of lightning.

ON SHOE as he pulls his foot loose, scrambles back against  
the ledge; he's shivering now, a cornered animal.

But as the Horseman advances with silent menace -- CRAAAAAACK!  
The Horseman suddenly falls into a gaping HOLE in the roof.

FOLLOW SHOE as he slowly moves to the hole, peering down at  
the Horseman, who clings to a rotted beam, legs dangling.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
In the end, wasn't skill or wits that saved  
me. It was blind luck. And blind faith.

ON SHOE, he hesitates -- torn for a moment -- but then reaches down a hand to help his enemy. The Horseman snarls defiantly:

HORSEMAN #1  
He'll send the others.

The Horseman DELIBERATELY LETS GO... falling down through the mall's central atrium... SMASHING onto a coffee stand!

OVER SHOE'S SHOULDER, he looks down at the dead Horseman... as an awe-struck Jeff approaches on the first floor, FLASHLIGHT in hand. As Jeff shines his up the atrium at Shoe, we;

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER, THE MALL PARKING LOT -- The rain has stopped. Shoe emerges victoriously from the main mall entrance. In his new gear, walking tall, he looks like a new man.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.)  
Was never much of a shopper, but that trip to the Westmont Mall got me a few things I really needed: Some confidence for starters...

Shoe wistfully stares at his MAP... then crumples it up, dropping it down a rain-swept gutter.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
...and the traveling companion I'd convinced myself I didn't need.

Shoe joins Jeff, who pushes a SHOPPING CART full of supplies.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Knew I had to make a radical change to throw the other horsemen off my scent. So I went south with Jeff.

Shoe and Jeff head off together, away from the mall.

SHOEMAKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Said he was heading to a place where a bunch of survivors were gathering, for some cosmic event...

Both men react to a meteorological phenomenon in the distance: a GIANT BALL LIGHTNING rising into the night sky. Jeff points --

JEFF (V.O.)  
-- That's it! Uktena.

OFF Shoe's wondrous face, aglow in the ascending light...

CLOSE ON Shoe's journal as it slams shut.

FADE TO BLACK.