

HIPPO LODGE

Horror Movie

set in Africa

MAIN CHARACTERS

Mike Kovacs local representative of NGO that builds shelters for homeless people, social education worker with too high an opinion of his (technical) abilities

Jenny Okora local business administrator of NGO, capable and lonely behind her thick glasses

Brandon Davis works in philanthropic architect's office, Africa stint shall help his career

Sarah Johnson Brandons girl frind, student of interior design - came to Africa because of her boyfriend

Robby de Groot eternal student of electrical engineering at the University of Amsterdam, affords long-distance holidays through NGO work

Maria Robles Robby's South American fiancée from land owning family - "art ethnologist"

Rajiv Patel Mike's local project manager, smarter than his boss

FADE IN:

EXT. SAVANNA -- NIGHT

Small trees, widely spaced so their canopy does not close, crouch in the silvery steppe. In the background raises the silhouette of a majestic mountain. WILD ANIMALS (zebras, wildebeests, elephants...) abide in the moonlight. The SOUNDS of the NIGHTLY WILD are eventually accentuated by the LAUGHTER OF HYENAS...

...DRUMS and HOLLERS of INDIGENOUS MUSIC.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / ENTRANCE GATE -- NIGHT

From a wooden tableau towering by a freestanding arch a carved hippo emerges, its graved jaws opening into the moonlight.

Cloddish letters spell HIPPO LODGE.

There seems to be a mean glimmer in the wooden hippo's beady eyes.

DRUMS and HOLLERS increase...

INT. HIPPO LODGE / CENTRAL DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

BARE BLACK FEET shoot up - land on the ground - accompanied by pouncing spear shafts.

Hordes of TOURISTS, armed with plates, jostle around a copious buffet while MASAI DANCERS in checkered tubes of

Something touches the shoulder of the young woman. She spins around with a start.

The YOUNG MAN recoils his hand.

YOUNG WOMAN
Don't - do that...

She's irritated by another little SHADOW jumping from the tree top.

The young man sees it too.

YOUNG MAN
(looking back at
her)
Watch it, they're very sexist.

YOUNG WOMAN
Who?

YOUNG MAN
Baboons. They're only after women.

YOUNG WOMAN
Nonsense.

YOUNG MAN
The receptionist told me. There's a number of white women raped every year by baboons. - They keep it a secret, so the tourists do not stay away.

YOUNG WOMAN
You wish!

RUSTLE from the tree top.

Involuntarily the young woman takes refuge in the young man's arms.

The young man strokes her hair.

YOUNG MAN
There-there...

He looks around - as if he has seen something...

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / SWIMMING POOL - **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA** -- NIGHT

The moving/BREATHING field of vision observes the YOUNG COUPLE by the swimming pool.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / SWIMMING POOL -- NIGHT

The YOUNG WOMAN looks up to YOUNG MAN.

YOUNG WOMAN
What?

YOUNG MAN
 (stroking her hair)
 Nothing...

Their mouths meet. They slowly collapse on one of the sun-loungers scattered around the pool.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / SWIMMING POOL - **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA** --
 NIGHT

The mobile field of vision approaches the MATING COUPLE on the sun-lounger.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / SWIMMING POOL -- NIGHT

The YOUNG WOMAN, undressed, MOANS under the caresses of her lover. The YOUNG MAN pulls off his underpants, throws them away.

They land in the pool.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / SWIMMING POOL - **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA** --
 NIGHT

The young man's underpants slowly sink. The field of vision breaks free from this sight - moves...

...over to the young COUPLE having sex.

The YOUNG WOMAN, looking over her lover's shoulder (into the **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA**), breaks up:

YOUNG WOMAN
 (stifled)
 Oh no...

YOUNG MAN
 (panting into her
 ear)
 Oh, yes...

YOUNG WOMAN
 (eyes wide)
 Oh, please...

A BLOODCURDLING YELL escapes her throat, drowned by a SMACKING SOUND.

Lance's bloodstained tip swishes though our field of vision.

The YOUNG MAN turns about, looks into the Subjective Camera, dumfounded...

Another SMACK sends him back on the terrified woman's bare chest.

She untangles herself from her lover's collapsed corpse, bloodied and crawling backwards, still not able to jerk her eyes free from what she sees looking into the - ever approaching - Subjective Camera...

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / SWIMMING POOL - TREE TOP -- NIGHT

Two pairs of BABOON's eyes look down in direction of the swimming pool.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / SWIMMING POOL -- NIGHT

A BLACK WOMAN IN STAFF UNIFORM comes to tidy up around the pool and line up the scattered sun-loungers.

As she hears SHRIEKS from the tree top, she pauses and looks up, sees the shadow of a BABOON jumping onto the roof of the next building and disappear.

The her eyes lower - catch sight of the swimming pool.

The gutted corpses of the YOUNG MAN and the YOUNG WOMAN float in the water.

The black woman runs away.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / ENTRANCE GATE -- NIGHT

The BLACK WOMAN IN STAFF UNIFORM runs through the looming entrance gate with the monstrous woodcut of the hippopotamus into the moonlit steppe.

Under the hippopotamus is emblazoned in coarse wooden letters the lodges name - and title of the film:

H I P P O L O D G E

FADE OUT:

EXT. NAIROBI SKYLINE -- DAY

Subtitle "Some years later - Nairobi, Kenya"

EXT. DAGORETTI STREET -- DAY

Congested streets in ths colorful part off the city's center.

JENNY OKORO, 25, a businesslike female mulatto, beautiful face behind spectacles, jumps from a ramshackle little bus.

The mobile phone is glued to her ear as she weaves her way through the milling crowd.

JENNY
(into the mobile)
Choma stalls...?

Her eyes scan the muddled shops and stalls around her.

One of them sells take away fish.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I can't... wait!

Under the canopy of the fish place a small group of 3 white men stands out against the smoking pans.

They sit at a little table. An Indian who sits with them puts down his mobile and waves to Jenny.

She stashes away her mobile and crosses the street to the dingy restaurant.

One of the white men, scrubby MIKE KOVACS (42), is standing at the head of the ramshackle plastic table full of food debris.

As we approach with Jenny, we hear him talking:

MIKE

(unctuously)

...not Brandon - or Sarah - not even me can make that difference, because this project is not about ego, it's about dedication: Brandon's volunteer pledge as civil engineer for our Street Children Shelter...

As he talks the CAMERA takes in his listeners for us:

hunky BRANDON DAVIS (22)

longhaired ROBBY DE GROOT (27)

shifty RAJIV PATEL (31)

Jenny takes a plastic chair next to Rajiv and sits down at the table.

MIKE (CONT'D)

...Sarah's generous expertise as team assistant and sports coach for the children of Kibera.

From the half-light of the interior restaurant shed SARAH JOHNSON (21) approaches, "cheerleader" type.

She leaves a somewhat shaky impression as she takes place between Brandon and Robby in front of her untouched dish...

...a boiled fish staring at her from a scratched plastic plate.

Robby leans over to her, speaking from the corner of his mouth:

ROBBY

(Dutch accent)

You look like you've seen a ghost.

SARAH

Which ghost?

Bobby gestures with his head in the shed (the direction Sarah came from).

ROBBY

Back there.

SARAH

You can say that again.

She fishes a little plastic bottle out of her purse, hanging from the back of the chair. She squirts some disinfecting gel from it in her hands and rubs it in.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I've been here some time now.

ROBBY

Just three weeks.

SARAH

Still - I got used to many things. But I'll never get used to these toilets.

ROBBY

It was your guys' idea to finally eat real African, at a real African place. I warned you: it comes with a dessert...

While Robby trifles with Sarah, Mike's sermon goes on and, now, addresses Robby.

MIKE

Robby, you've been our European resource person for this autumn, and I'd like again to express my thanks on behalf of the project.

(to the others)

This guy not only interrupted his studies at the University of Amsterdam for us, he also sacrificed his holidays...

ROBBY

(interrupting)

I didn't sacrifice my holidays, man. This is holidays for me. And what's about this safari you promised us the whole time?

MIKE

The safari, right. I was just going to get to that.

BRANDON

Yeah, safari.

MIKE

Traditionally our project invites its volunteers at the end of their stint to a safari.

(he turns to Jenny)

Jenny has prepared everything, I think. So she can give us an idea what the program will be tomorrow. Take it away, Jenny.

JENNY

Okay, I have here - first...

Jenny hands out sheets of paper from a clipboard, one for every person.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I've written down... for everyone...

The others study their papers.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Basically the driver will take us to the National Park. There we will see wild animals.

BRANDON

Lions?

JENNY

Lions - but there are many other interesting wild animals: zebras, wildebeests, buffalos...

BRANDON

I want to see lions.

JENNY

There're lions as well.

ROBBY

If they don't sleep.

BRANDON

Why would they sleep?

ROBBY

They sleep most of the day, come only out at certain times to hunt.

BRANDON

Can we not take some raw meat along?

JENNY

(clutching her
clipboard)

Why would we do that?

BRANDON

To lure out the lions. Better safe than sorry.

JENNY

I don't think this will be necessary.

ROBBY

Where will we sleep?

JENNY

I'm going to get to this. We'll stay over night to watch the racing hippo in the morning - we'll be back back in town the evening of the day after tomorrow.

BRANDON

Racing hippo?

ROBBY

A hippo can make 40 miles an hour. I read this in the Lonley Planet.

BRANDON

You're kidding.

(to Jenny)

Is that true?

JENNY

The hippo can run faster than any human being.

SARAH

Is it - dangerous?

JENNY

Hippo's vegetarian.

ROBBY

Still kills humans.

(to Brandon)

More than lions ever have.

SARAH

Why would it do this?

JENNY

A hippo only attacks those who bother it.

SARAH

And you want us to watch them?

JENNY

Only if you want to. We can cancel the hippos and return earlier.

BRANDON/ROBBY

No!

SARAH

Where will we sleep?

ROBBY
In tents, I hope.

SARAH
But when a hippo comes...

ROBBY
If we don't leave our tents, we're
okay.
(to Jenny)
Isn't that so?

JENNY
There're beds booked for us in the
Safari Lodge which we shall reach
by the evening of the first day.

BRANDON
Safari Lodge, is that, like - a
camp?

RAJIV
They have air conditioned clay
bungalows and a three star cook.

SARAH
In the wilderness?

RAJIV
It'ss the ultimate safari
destination. Set high on a bush-
cloaked hill with long views over
the savannah and down to the winding
coils of the hippo-filled Mara
River.

BRANDON
Won't that be a bit - expensive?
I mean, for our volunteer budget?

RAJIV
They know, we're a non profit
organization. So we'll get a
special price.

BRANDON
How special?

RAJIV
Very special.

SARAH
(looking up from
her sheet of paper)
Here it says, the driver will pick
us up at 6 in the morning.

JENNY
That's right. He comes from the
area, his tribe lives in the
National Park.

BRANDON

So he knows where there's lions.

JENNY

I reckon.

SARAH

(to the others)

So we maybe go to bed early today.

ROBBY

And the party??

The others do not respond.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

He! Don't you remember that we all agreed to let our hair down once before we leave this country?

(to Rajiv)

You told me, your cousin runs the hottest joint in town. Can you take us there?

Rajiv checks with Mike. He nods.

MIKE

(to Robby)

Beware of the girls.

ROBBY

Why? They're build different from the rest?

MIKE

Just watch it...

SARAH

(to Robby)

Isn't Mariola coming with you - with us tomorrow?

ROBBY

Mariola?

SARAH

Your fiancée.

ROBBY

Maria.

SARAH

Isn't she coming with us?

ROBBY

She'll return from her field trip the day after tomorrow.

(to Jenny)

We're back by then, right?

JENNY

Don't worry.

BRANDON

(to Robby)

"Field trip" - what's it about?

ROBBY

Statues - or paintings - artists -
whatever..

SARAH

(indignant)

You don't know what your fiancée
studies.

ROBBY

Nobody knows...

INT. DISCOTHEQUE -- NIGHT

The place is packed. Smartly dressed MEN, sexy WOMEN -
steamy atmosphere. MUSIC BLARES.

ROBBY burrows his way from the gents through the dancing
crowd.

STELLA (22), a hot Nubian beauty in tight glitter top,
dances in his way.

STELLA

(through the noise)

Hello stranger. Like African dance?

She rubs herself up to him. Robby takes up the wiggling
motion.

From the crowded bar JENNY, RAJIV, BRANDON and SARAH observe
the come-on dance.

SARAH

I can do this.

She rubs up to Brandon, clutches his ass...

...as Stella clutches Robby's. The latter, tipsy and
animated by the motion, gets more involved.

The WAITER brings an non-alcoholic beverage to JENNY who
still presses her clipboard at her chest. Rajiv gets this
third beer.

Stella's and Robby's come-on moves up several gears.

Jenny looks to Rajiv. He gives it a shrug. Brandon is about
to set off...

SARAH (CONT'D)

Where you're going?

BRANDON

Bathroom.

SARAH

I'm coming with you.

BRANDON

To the gents?

EXT. GUESTHOUSE -- MORNING

A mini bus stands in front of the "Piri Piri Guest House". SARAH and BRANDON, wearing expedition hats, look from the passenger seats through the open side door - at JENNY and RAJIV who stride in hiking boots from the guest house's entrance towards the mini bus.

MIKE waits - next to MOSES, the ebony driver - by the front passenger door.

RAJIV

(to Mike)

Coming...

He climbs into the bus and takes place opposite Brandon while Jenny (with "invisible clipboard") takes a waiting stand beside the sliding door.

ROBBY, hurriedly dressed in outdoor gear, emerges from the guest house's entrance - followed by STELLA, still in disco garb.

ROBBY

(stopping by the
sliding door)

Hi, good morning. - This is Stella.

Mike exchanges glances with Jenny.

STELLA

Hi!

She shakes Brandon's hands - Sarah's...

ROBBY

Stella studies business
administration at the Nairobi
Institute of Management.

He climbs into the bus. Stella prepares to follow suit.

MIKE

(to Jenny)

Now, what is this?

Jenny intercepts Stella.

JENNY

*[says something in Swahili that
sounds like a reprimand]

STELLA

*[answers in Swahili - sounding defiant]

ROBBY

(from inside the bus)

What's the matter?

JENNY

She wants to come with you.

ROBBY

Oh...

JENNY

She says, you invited her.

Stella lookw at Robby.

ROBBY

(on a whim)

Yeah, she can come.

JENNY

(to Stella)

*[Swahili - this time in admonishing tone]

Robby doesn't understand a word, observes the exchange suspiciously...

STELLA

*[replies in Swahili, sounding bit uncertain, then as if she pulls herself together]

(to Robby)

It's alright.

She's about to withdraw.

ROBBY

(to Jenny)

He! What you tell her?

SARAH

That you have a fiancée.

ROBBY

(to Jenny)

Is that right?

Jenny doesn't reply. Robby looks from her to Sarah.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

But that's none of your business. -
Stella! You're coming.

Stella hesitates, looks at Jenny - Mike...

JENNY

She's not really dressed for an excursion.

ROBBY

That's okay, I'll buy.
(to Stella)
Come. Be my guest.

Stella checks with Jenny - Jenny with Mike - who shrugs - Jenny nods at Stella.

Stella climbs in the bus.

Rajiv sneers at her extensive bust size, barley held by Stella's skimpy disco top.

STELLA

(to Rajiv)
Habari gani?

RAJIV

Mzuri sana.

Jenny gets on the bus.

ROBBY

(to Jenny)
You know where we can get something to wear for Stella?

JENNY

The driver knows.

Moses puts the car in the first and they start.

EXT. NAIROBI / ARTERIAL ROAD -- DAY

The little bus merges into the stop-start city traffic.

EXT. NAIROBI / SHOPPING CENTER PARKING -- DAY

ROBBY, escorting STELLA, follows JENNY from the mall to the mini bus where the OTHERS are expecting them.

SARAH

(to Brandon)
Would you do that if I was on a field trip?

BRANDON

What field trip?

SARAH

Maria, Robby's fiancée...

BRANDON

What about her?

SARAH

She comes back the day after
tomorrow - and he...

Stella sports some sexy hiking gear.

MIKE

Okay, everybody in the car!

Brandon and Sarah climb on their seats, followed by Jenny and Robby. Finally Stella. A corner of her glittery disco top looks from a plastic bag (labeled "Tremendous Outdoor") she has in her right hand.

The mini bus dives off.

EXT. NAIROBI / RADIAL ROAD -- DAY

The mini bus drives in the stream of traffic that leaves the city.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS -- DAY

Our PASSENGERS observe different street scenes as they pass in front of the car's windows.

MUSIC from the radio informs the experience.

EXT. TWO LANE RURAL ROAD -- DAY

Traffic has decreased considerably, giving way to DRAUGHT ANIMAL TRAILERS and PEDESTRIANS - as our mini van passes, exuding RADIO MUSIC.

"National Park - 30 Kilometers" is written on a signpost. Some curio stalls squat on the side of the road. Their OPERATORS wake up as our mini bus pulls over and stops.

The sliding door opens and BRANDON climbs out, gives a hand to SARAH.

The VENDORS from the stalls surround her, proffering their artifacts. She drags the cloud of them with her, walking over to a stand with colorful fabrics.

ROBBY stretches his limbs in the sun, sees Brandon examining one of the lances at another stall.

BRANDON

(to Mike)

He, are these real?

MIKE

They're Masai spears.

RAJIV

To kill the lion.

BRANDON

No kiddin'...

MOSES, the driver, drinks something from a calabash a WOMAN offers him.

MIKE

Masias couldn't marry before they
hadn't killed a lion,
traditionally...

BRANDON

(to Moses)

That true? - You're a Masai, right?

MOSES

Today Masais prefer to work in the
city.

MIKE

They're good watchmen.

RAJIV

After midnight, if you have a Masai
watchman, he'll come past your
bedroom window and cough till you
wake up.

BRANDON

Why would he do that?

RAJIV

So you know that you're the one
who's sleeping.

MIKE

A Masai watchman will hunt any
burglar down, you cannot outrun
him.

RAJIV

That's why you have to cut off his
head first if you want to rob a
house he's guarding.

ROBBY

He, Brandon. Wanna fight?

Robby sways a lance from the stall at Brandon, and they
start a mock fencing match, looked at by the uncomprehending
STALL OWNER.

BRANDON

(holds weapon out
to him)

How much?

STALL OWNER

10.000.

BRANDON

No way. 1.000!

STALL OWNER
10.000.

BRANDON
You dream.

STALL OWNER
Okay, 8.500.

BRANDON
Naw. No lions to kill at my place.

He gives back the lance.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
What else you have?

STALL OWNER
Metal bracelet.

BRANDON
To heavy.

STALL OWNER
Rope bracelet.

BRANDON
I don't wear jewelry.

STALL OWNER
Gusii axe, Gusii good ironworkers.

BRANDON
That's just another weapon.

His eyes search the shelves, scour artifacts like gourds, blackwood sculptures, coiled wire necklaces - go beyond the usual display and come to rest upon the sooty soapstone carving of a...

CLOSE

...crooked hippopotamus, peering from the upper woodwork of the stall.

SARAH
(calling from the
mini bus)
Brandon! We're waiting!

Brandon stares at the carving. Its small snout is pierced as if to hag from a necklace.

BRANDON
(pointing to it)
How much?

The stall owner fails to give an answer.

RAJIV
Not for sale.

BRANDON

Why?

RAJIV

It's a familiar spirit - spirit of this stall.

BRANDON

Looks mean. For a familiar spirit.

RAJIV

You cannot be too picky whom to ask for help in this country.

BRANDON

I want to have it.

RAJIV

Forget it. He won't sell it to you.

MINI BUS - Robby and Stella, on their seats, wait for the continuation of the journey. Robby rummages in a plastic bag and pulls out a pair of earrings.

ROBBY

(giving them to Stella)

For you.

STELLA

How much did you pay for them?

ROBBY

I don't know, I bought it with all this.

(plastic bag is full of artifacts)

You don't like them?

STELLA

Next time I get you a better price in Nairobi.

ROBBY

You says there'S going to be a next time?

He helps her fixing the earrings.

Rajiv comes from the stall where Brandon still haggles with the owner.

SARAH

(to Rajiv)

Is he coming?

She carries textiles she purchased.

RAJIV
He's just buying something, he
comes in a second.

Rajiv climbs into the bus. Sarah follows him. Jenny waits
for Brandon who comes running from the stall.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS -- DAY

BRANDON jumps into the bus. JENNY climbs after him and
closes the door.

MIKE
(from the passenger
seat)
Here we go.

The vehicle sets off.

SARAH
(to Brandon)
What you got?

He shows her a leather necklace.

RAJIV
(mocking)
No hippo?

Brandon throws him a sly glance.

EXT. TURN-OFF -- DAY

The mini bus turns off the tarmac and rocks down an earth
road - past a guidepost "National Park - 2 Kilometers".

EXT. NATIONAL PARK'S GATE -- DAY

The mini bus stops at the gate's counter - expected, on
the other side, by a flock of CURIO HAWKERS in checkered
tubes of fabric.

They observe the payment technicalities at the window and
leap to their feet as the mini bus finally pulls out.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS AT PARK'S GATE -- DAY

MOSES slows down as the HAWKERS practically block the track.

ROBBY
(looking over his
shoulder)
What the...

Artifacts (almost identical with the ones of the street
side stalls) are pressed against or held through the windows
into the mini buses interior, primed with escalating SALES
PITCHES of their VENDORS.

MIKE
Close the windows! Watch your
belongings!

The passengers try to carry out the order, but it is easier
said than done.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(to Moses)
Don't stop! Keep on driving!

ROBBY
(to the vendors)
He! We already have your stuff! We
bought it down the road!

But the vendors do not give up.

EXT. PARK'S GATE -- DAY

The swaying mini bus burrows its way though the onslaught
and stops, abruptly, at a SHRIEK.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS AT PARK'S GATE -- DAY

MIKE looks at MOSES, alarmed.

ROBBY
What is it?

SARAH
Did we hit anybody?

BRANDON
We're too slow for that...

EXT. PARK'S GATE -- DAY

The CROWD pulls a CHILD from beneath the mini buses front
end, a 10 year old boy.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS AT PARK'S GATE -- DAY

MOSES SAYS something in SWAHILI.

MIKE
(nervously)
What?

JENNY
Probably slipped.

BRANDON
Who?

JENNY
The little boy.

SARAH
Is he hurt?

EXT. PARK'S GATE -- DAY

The BOY, clutching a little soapstone carving, seems in dazed state but wards it off and starts his sales pitch again, heading for the buses back window through which BRANDON looks outside. The other VENDORS follow suit.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS AT PARK'S GATE -- DAY

MIKE sinks back in the passenger seat.

MIKE

Pew, that was a close thing.

MOSES

I drive?

MIKE

Slowly...

EXT. PARK'S GATE -- DAY

The bus starts to move at a snail's pace. The VENDORS do not give up.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS AT PARK'S GATE -- DAY

ROBBY takes his plastic bag.

ROBBY

We show them, what we bought, then they'll let us be.

He fishes some artifices from the bag.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

(holding them to
the window)

See? We already got your stuff.

Suddenly the CROWD gives up, withdraws.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

Whow, that worked.

Looking for applause, he turns to the others. They stare at BRANDON who, following Robby's example, holds up an artifice: the sooty soapstone carving of the mean little hippopotamus.

MOSES whispers something in vernacular.

Through the windows the crowd can be seen dispersing itself. Or is it withdrawing in awe?

RAJIV

(to Brandon)

Heh, you finally took it!

BRANDON

Don't worry. I put some dollars in its place.

STELLA

We must bring it back...

BRANDON

Why?

STELLA

It is evil spirit.

BRANDON

This sweet little hippo?

He threats a piece of string through the hole in its snout.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

It's our luck charm!

He hangs it to th coat-hook by the buses side window.

Moses winces.

MIKE

(to Moses)

Let's get out of here. Before they change their mind.

EXT. PARK'S GATE -- DAY

The mini bus takes off.

EXT. NATIONAL PARK -- DAY

The mini bus drives between widely spaced trees. In the background raises a majestic mountain. WILD ANIMALS (zebras, wildebeests, elephants...) move about. A spectacular sight - eventually punctuated by the SIGNAL TONE of a mobile phone.

ROBBY (O.S.)

De Groot.

MARIA (TELEPHONE)

Robby. Where are you?

EXT./INT. MINI BUS IN THE NATIONAL PARK -- DAY

ROBBY has his mobile phone at the ear.

ROBBY

Maria? Where are *you*?

EXT. GUESTHOUSE -- DAY

MARIA ROBLES, 25, feisty and well-off, stands beside her rucksack, mobile phone at her ear.

MARIA

At the Piri Piri. At the reception
they say you took off this morning.
Why didn't you tell me?

EXT./INT. MINI BUS IN THE NATIONAL PARK -- DAY

ROBBY

I expected you back the day after
tomorrow. Then I would have been
at the guesthouse again.

Looks at STELLA next to him.

MARIA (TELEPHONE)

I wanted to surprise you.

ROBBY

Yeah, I'm sorry.

EXT. GUESTHOUSE -- DAY

MARIA

Where are you?

ROBBY (TELEPHONE)

I'm at the National Park, with the
others. We're on a safari.

MARIA

I want to come!

EXT./INT. MINI BUS IN THE NATIONAL PARK -- DAY

ROBBY

That's - difficult. We are in the
middle of nowhere.

MARIA (TELEPHONE)

Where will you stay over night?

EXT. GUESTHOUSE -- DAY

MARIA runs up and down with the mobile glued to her ear.

MARIA

But that's no problem. The Safari
Lodge, they have a landing strip,
and there's a flight out of Wilson
airport this afternoon.

ROBBY (TELEPHONE)

Is there?

MARIA

Yeah, I see you tonight. - Robby,
do you hear me?

She looks at her mobile.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS IN THE NATIONAL PARK -- DAY

ROBBY looks at his mobile, tries to re-dial - lets is sink.

ROBBY

Dead zone.

RAJIV

Maria's in Nairobi?

ROBBY

She says there's a flight from Wilson to our lodge tonight. Is that so?

JENNY

I think the plane lands in he afternoon.

ROBBY

Great.

(to Stella)

That was my fiancée. She's catching up with us tonight.

EXT. NATIONAL PARK -- DAY

The mini bus dives through more spectacular scenery.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS IN THE NATIONAL PARK

MOSES stares to the stony track he's negotiating- straight ahead, not daring to turn his head.

In his neck the sooty soapstone carving of the mean little hippo bobs from its suspension.

SARAH has pulled out her camera, takes photos of the scenery one of ROBBY wo sits uneasy next to STELLA.

EXT. NATIONAL PARK -- DAY

The mini bus trundles past a COUPLE OF MASAIS in red tubes of fabric who defile against the sky.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS IN THE NATIONAL PARK

SARAH puts down her camera.

SARAH

There're people living out here?

MIKE

Masai.

SARAH

But isn't that too dangerous? I mean, all the wild animals...

MIKE

Sarah, this is not a zoo. The animals have always been here, so have the Masai. They know how to help themselves. They walk very far. Always two of them.

BRANDON

Why two?

RAJIV

Lions never attack two men. And they don't like red. That's why the Masai always wear red when they go on a trip.

SARAH

So, Moses, you're Masai?

Moses doesn't respond.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Moses?

Mike looks at the soapstone carving of the little hippo bobbing from its suspension in Moses' neck - the uneasy expression on Moses' face...

EXT. NATIONAL PARK REST AREA -- DAY

The bus stops at a picnic area with weather-beaten benches and tables. Its PASSENGERS emerge.

BRANDON

(to Sarah)

You have the moist toilet tissue?

SARAH fishes another green package from her bag.

SARAH

(to Mike)

Where we go?

MIKE

Behind the bushes. Men to left side, woman to the right.

SARAH

Is it - safe?

RAJIV

There're no lions around here.

SARAH

You're sure?

MIKE

Don't worry, Sarah. Nothing ever happened to a tourist going to the bathroom in the national park.

STELLA

I come with you.

SARAH

(relieved)

Thank you.

The women disappear in the thicket.

A snake coils away as ROBBY turns up near a shrub, unzips his fly and takes a leak.

He looks around, notices moving coppice. But nothing emerges from it.

Robby zips his fly again and returns to the mini bus. Only Mike stands in the open front passenger door, smoking a cigarette.

MIKE

(as he catches sight
of Robby)

Don't worry about Stella. Rajiv
will take care of her.

Robby's slow on the uptake.

MIKE (CONT'D)

At the Safari Lodge, Maria will
not even see her.

ROBBY

But what will you do to her?

MIKE

Nothing. Put her in a car. There's
staff from the lodge driving to
the city at any hour of night or
day.

ROBBY

Thank you.

LATER

MIKE, ROBBY, STELLA, JENNY, SARAH and BRANDON stand around the mini bus - RAJIV comes from the bushes.

Mike looks at him questioning.

RAJIV

Disappeared into thin air.

SARAH

(to Mike)

You think a lion got him?

MIKE

Moses hails from here. He wouldn't
fall victim to a wild animal.

BRANDON

So, where's he got to?

MIKE

To his people, I think.

SARAH

Why would he do this? Desert us in
the wilderness?

Mike looks at the soapstone carving of the sooty little hippo...

EXT./INT. MINI BUS IN THE NATIONAL PARK -- AFTERNOON

It bobs from its suspension - coming to rest as the mini bus stops.

MIKE looks squinty over the driving wheel while JENNY, on the passenger seat beside him, is busy with a laboriously unfolded map.

EXT. NATIONAL PARK - PARTING OF THE WAYS -- AFTERNOON

The mini bus stands in front of a fork in the tracks.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS AT PARTING OF WAYS -- AFTERNOON

MIKE

Left of right?

JENNY

(doesn't know)

Left.

Mike bends over to look at the map, observed by the rest of the PASSENGERS.

MIKE

Where are we?

JENNY

(pointing)

Here, I think.

MIKE

And our lodge?

JENNY

Here.

MIKE

What makes you think this is Safari?

JENNY

See the landing strip?

MIKE

Yeah.

SARAH

(loud)
Look!

EXT./INT. NATIONAL PARK - VIEW THROUGH THE MINI BUSES SIDE WINDOWS -- AFTERNOON

There's a spectacular FIGHT BETWEEN WILD ANIMALS going on.

The MINI BUSES PASSENGERS watch with awe and fascination. Their cameras CLICK.

The soapstone carving of the sooty little hippo hangs "breathless" from its suspension.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / ENTRANCE GATE -- AFTERNOON

The mini bus stops at a decayed free standing arc.

JENNY sticks her head out of the front seat passenger window.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS AT HIPPO LODGE' ENTRANCE GATE -- AFTERNOON

JENNY's head comes inside again.

JENNY

It doesn't say.

MIKE

Looks like an entrance.

BRANDON

That our lodge?

JENNY

We don't know yet.

BRANDON

Sorry guys, but I have to bleed my lizard.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / ENTRANCE GATE -- AFTERNOON

BRANDON climbs out of the vehicle and goes over to some bushes by the foot of the arc.

The other PASSENGERS emerge from the mini bus to stretch their legs.

Brandon attends to his business, sees the somber buildings of Hippo Lodge looming at the horizon.

A weathered tableau peeks out of the bushes, exhibiting a carved hippo over cloddish letters. Brandon directs his yellow jet into the graced hippo's gaping jaws.

Some RODENTs dash out of the opening.

SARAH sees how Brandon starts back, gets mixed up below the belt. He wraps up and comes back towards the group.

BRANDON

Is that really our lodge over there?

RAJIV

Could be.

ROBBY

Gloomy.

JENNY

(fumbling with the
map)

Looks to me like - rather...

Doesn't get a hang of the map.

SARAH

Why don't we just drive there and check if it is Safari?

BRANDON

The board said something different.

MIKE

(irritated)

Which board?

The weathered tableau exhibiting a carved hippo is freed from the thicket enshrouding it, uncovering some cloddish letters.

RAJIV

(reading)

Hippo Lodge.

MIKE

Okay, we have to look in on them anyhow. We could need some petrol.

RAJIV

Petrol?

MIKE

Our petrol will take us to Safari Lodge. But since we're here, why not check if they can help us out? Better safe than sorry.

EXT. LANDING STRIP -- AFTERNOON

A little airplane stands at the end of a landing strip surrounded by savanna. A fuel truck drives up to it while hotel jeep DRIVERS take aboard some TOURISTS and their luggage.

MARIA stands alone with her backpack in the afternoon sun.

MARIA

Great...

She finishes dialing a number and takes the mobile to her ear.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Robby? That you? I'm at the Safari Lodge's landing strip. Can anybody come pick me up?

EXT. NATIONAL PARK / WAY TO HIPPO LODGE -- AFTERNOON

The mini bus staggers towards the compound of Hippo Lodge looming at the horizon.

ROBBY (O.S.)

We're not at the Safari yet, honey.
Got a bit lost...

EXT. LANDING STRIP -- AFTERNOON

MARIA

(into the phone)
Where are you now?

EXT./INT. MINI BUS ON ITS WAY HIPPO LODGE -- AFTERNOON

ROBBY

Hippo Lodge...

EXT. LANDING STRIP -- AFTERNOON

MARIA

(into the phone)
Is that far?

EXT./INT. MINI BUS ON ITS WAY HIPPO LODGE -- AFTERNOON

ROBBY

Not so far, our driver thinks.

EXT. LANDING STRIP -- AFTERNOON

In the background the FUEL TRUCK DRIVER starts to fill up the little airplane. The PILOT goes around the plane, inspecting it, while PASSENGERS line up to climb on board.

MARIA

(into her phone)
Robby?

EXT./INT. MINI BUS ON ITS WAY HIPPO LODGE -- AFTERNOON

ROBBY

(into his phone)
Maria? You hear me?

EXT. LANDING STRIP -- AFTERNOON

MARIA
 (into her phone)
 Hippo Lodge, not so far from here,
 right?

EXT./INT. MINI BUS ON ITS WAY HIPPO LODGE -- AFTERNOON

ROBBY
 (into his phone)
 Maria?

He takes the mobile of his ear, looks at it.

RAJIV
 Dead zone.

ROBBY
 Maybe the battery this time.
 (types on the
 mobile's number
 pad)
 SMS might still go through.

RAJIV
 What you write her?

ROBBY
 She shall wait for us at the Safari.

BRANDON
 When will we get there?

MIKE
 When we're done here, we drive
 over.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE -- AFTERNOON

The mini bus drives up in front a dilapidated reception.
 The PASSENGERS disembark. Look around.
 The premises and its buildings are deserted.

RAJIV
 (to Mike)
 I don't think you find any petrol
 here.

SARAH involuntarily takes BRANDON's hand.

EXT. LANDING STRIP -- AFTERNOON

MARIA hops in one of the jeep-taxis, turns to the driver.

MARIA
 Hippo Lodge!

DRIVER
 (starting the car)
 Safari Lodge.

MARIA
 No, not Safari - Hippo Lodge.

DRIVER
 Safari.

MARIA
 Hippo Lodge - bring me to Hippo
 Lodge!

The driver stares at her.

MARIA (CONT'D)
 What are we waiting for?

DRIVER
 Hippo Lodge?

MARIA
 Yes. Finally got it.

DRIVER
 Not possible.

MARIA
 Why? It is not far. I pay. How
 much do you want?

The PILOT at the little plane observes how Maria is ushered out of the jeep-taxi which, then, speeds off without passenger.

Maria turns to the other waiting vehicles.

DRIVER 2
 (taking her backpack)
 Safari Lodge.

MARIA
 I don't want to go to Safari Lodge.
 Bring me to Hippo Lodge.

As he hesitates she snatches away her backpack from him.

MARIA (CONT'D)
 (to the other drivers)
 Hippo Lodge! Who's taking me to
 Hippo Lodge?

The pilot sees how the cars take off, leaving Maria all alone in the bay of the landing strip.

He walks over to her.

PILOT
 You want to fly back to Nairobi?

MARIA

Don't know what's gotten into them.

PILOT

...?

MARIA

Nobody seems to want to take me to the lodge.

PILOT

Safari Lodge?

MARIA

Hippo Lodge.

PILOT

Hippo Lodge!

MARIA

Now you start. What's wrong with Hippo Lodge?

PILOT

Isn't it shut down?

MARIA

Nonsense. My fiancé stays there over night. With a party of fellow travelers.

PILOT

At Hippo Lodge?

MARIA

We just phoned.

PILOT

So, they opened again...

MARIA

Is that so strange? All my fiends are there. And here, no-one wants to take me.

PILOT

You see, people here think the place is cursed.

MARIA

What??

PILOT

A young tourist couple seems to have been killed there, some years ago. The place eventually shut down after this. They tried to re-open it, several times, but either the food was poisoned, or there were problems with the drinking

(MORE)

PILOT (CONT'D)

water, or some of their bungalows burned down. It never worked out. The natives think the place is haunted.

MARIA

By whom?

PILOT

Some evil ghost. The people here are very superstitious, you must know.

MARIA

Yeah, an because of that I seem to be stranded.

PILOT

Rather fly back with me to Nairobi?

MARIA

No, I have to get - my fiancé - I can't let him wait because of some stupid superstition.

PILOT

So ,how will you get there?

MARIA

Can't we call someone? Some taxi?

PILOT

No more taxis out here.

(beat)

I could ask the driver of the fuel truck. He drives back to Naurok. I don't think he will take you to Hippo Lodge, but Naurok's in the direction. He could leave you out at the tun-off. From there you would have to walk.

MARIA

How far is it to Hippo Lodge - from the turn-off?

PILOT

A kilometer or two. You want me to ask the driver?

MARIA

He won't refuse?

PILOT

As I said, he will never take you to Hippo. You'll have to hop off on the way.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / SWIMMING POOL -- AFTERNOON

SARAH, BRANDON and ROBBY nose curiously though the premises.

Sarah stops between the turned over sun-loungers scattered around the pool.

Her eyes take in the empty pool, paint starting to peel off of the walls. A collapsed hose extends into the pool - running through a smeared motor pump next to two fuel canisters and a cover (like a manhole top) into the ground.

SHRIEKS make her look up into the top of a tree on the other side of the pool.

A crouching little SHADOW is jumping from there to the roof of a neighboring building.

Something touches her shoulder, and she spins around with a start.

BRANDON recoils his hand.

SARAH
Don't - do that...

She's irritated by another little SHADOW jumping from the tree top.

Robby comes out of one of the bungalows surrounding the pool.

ROBBY
(looking up to the
tree)
Baboons...

BRANDON
How does it look in there?

ROBBY
Could do with just some sheets...

He throws a stone into the tree causing some furious SHRIEKS, then makes off between the buildings.

BRANDON
(to Sarah)
Let's check if that pump is working.

SARAH
What for?

BRANDON
We can take a swim.

He goes over and pulls the pump's starter handle causing some dying SPUTTERS.

Sarah joins him and - as the pump finally starts - BEAKS THROUGH THE COVER beside it (on which, in taking a stand next to Brandon, she eventually positioned herself).

SARAH

Help!

Brandon quickly gabs her hand before she completely falls into the uncovered borehole.

BRANDON

(pulling her up
again)

That was close.

Clear water squirts out of the hose's end into the pool.

SARAH

What's this hole?

Brandon REPLIES something but the pump's SPATTER drowns out his words. He turns it off again.

BRANDON

What did you say?!

SARAH

Don't shout at me!

INT. HIPPO LODGE / LOBBY -- AFTERNOON

MIKE, JENNY and RAJIV study the faded map of the National Park behind the desk.

JENNY

Another hour?

Looks at Mike.

MIKE

Well, to Safari Lodge...

RAJIV

Naurok would be closer.

JENNY

(to Rajiv)

But that's just a dingy little hole.

RAJIV

Still might have a gas station.

JENNY

And if not? They probably don't even have a hotel, or none that's reasonable.

RAJIV

If we stay here for the night - there're rooms, everything...

Mike's uncertain.

RAJIV (CONT'D)

Prevents the risk of stranding
halfway to Safari Lodge in the
moonlight without beds.

MIKE

(to Rajiv)

Why don't you check how much
petrol's really in the tank.

RAJIV

Okay.

MIKE

Take a stick or something through
the nozzle. That gauge isn't really
working.

RAJIV

Okay.

Sets off.

MIKE

(after him)

And while you're at it.

RAJIV

(turning)

Yes?

MIKE

Check the premises if there are
any petrol supplies.

Jenny has discovered a battery powered lamp under the
reception. Tries the switch.

JENNY

Look, it's still working.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / LINEN ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Door opens and JENNY comes int the windowless room with
the light, MIKE stays at the door.

The cone from the lamp in Jenny's hand highlights shelves
full of neatly folded bedclothes.

JENNY

No shortage of sheets.

MIKE

You too think it's a good idea to
stay over night?

JENNY

We would definitely sleep in regular
beds.

MIKE

You think they'd join in?

JENNY

They'll might even think it's fun.
Part of the experience.

She squeezes past Mike into the hallway.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / HALLWAY -- AFTERNOON

JENNY switches off the lamp in her hands.

JENNY

Have you seen the kitchen?

MIKE

It must be - I think...
(looks around)
Over there?

They go into the direction MIKE mentioned.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / KITCHEN -- AFTERNOON

A cupboard door is opened, revealing some columns of canned food.

JENNY takes one of the cans, reads the label.

JENNY

(to Mike)
Expired.

MIKE

Since when.

JENNY

(giving the can to
Mike)
Quite some time.

Mike squints trying to decipher what's printed on the bottom side. Then he looks at the label.

MIKE

Stuff like this never expires.

JENNY

So why they put a date on it?

MIKE

Habit. - Look at this.

He pulls out something from under the sink.

A dusty casket of beer.

JENNY

No expiry date on these either?

MIKE

We're saved.

Jenny looks around.

JENNY

Unless someone get us for
trespassing.

MIKE

But we're willing pay, aren't we?
If any owner shows up.

JENNY

(still looking around)
What do you think happened here?

MIKE

Probably they went bankrupt. Bad
management.

(opens one of the
casket's cans -
the foam sloshes
into his face)

Or bad beer.

JENNY

If we have enough fuel, we still
make it to Safari Lodge?

MIKE

Check with Rajiv.

INT./EXT. HIPPO LODGE / SHED BEHIND THE KITCHEN --
AFTERNOON

In the twilight RAJIV putters around between furniture,
fixtures and gadgets stored in an open shed.

He looks through a kind of hatch - sees...

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / VIEW FROM THE HATCH IN THE SHED BEHIND
THE KITCHEN -- AFTERNOON

...a rusty generator

JENNY (O.S.)

Rajiv?

INT./EXT. HIPPO LODGE / SHED BEHIND THE KITCHEN --
AFTERNOON

RAJIV

Over here!

He betakes himself to the shed's open end.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / KITCHEN EXIT - SUBJECTIVE CAMERA --
AFTERNOON

In a moving field of vision JENNY comes down some stairs from the kitchen door and walks over to RAJIV emerging from a shed.

EXT. NATIONAL PARK -- AFTERNOON

The air strip fuel truck comes, rolling and swaying, up the track that leads through the savanna, emanating AFRICAN MUSIC.

INT./EXT. FUEL TRUCK -- AFTERNOON

MARIA is given a good shaking as the truck rumbles through a hole in earth road. In absence of a grab handle, she desperately holds onto the dashboard into which is set a NOISY disc player.

Wild animals rush off as the little truck's bonnet badgers them.

A forlorn direction sign passes on the right.

MARIA

Stop!

The FUEL TRUCK DRIVER doesn't hear her through the music.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Stop! - Don't you hear me? Stop!!

The man finally slows down the vehicle.

MARIA (CONT'D)

That was the turn-off to Hippo Lodge, right?

He avoids her eyes.

MARIA (CONT'D)

The signpost...

FUEL TRUCK DRIVER

What signpost?

MARIA

Reverse!

As he's obviously not prepared to comply, Maria takes her backpack and wants to get out of the car.

A hand grabs her at the wrist, the driver's.

MARIA (CONT'D)

What do you want from me?

FUEL TRUCK DRIVER

Better come to Naurok.

MARIA
 (wresting herself
 free)
 Let me go!

EXT. NATIONAL PARK / TURN-OFF TO HIPPO LODGE -- AFTERNOON

A backpack flies to the ground from the fuel trucks
 passenger door, MARIA jumps after it.

She slams the the front passenger door shut.

The truck sways on, belching a sooty cloud of exhaust.

Maria puts on her backpack and looks around, taking in the
 beautiful "magic hour" landscape.

She walks back to the direction sign, looks up at the carved
 arrow. It spells HIPPO LODGE (a funny little carved Hippo
 "runs" at the top).

BEEP.

Maria pulls out her mobile phone and opens the messages.

SMS
 GO ON AHEAD TO SAFARI LODGE. WE'LL
 CATCH-UP LATER. PRESENTLY AT
 HIPPO... (^_^)/" R

Maria stashes away her mobile, starts to smile.

MARIA
 Surprise.

She marches off in the direction indicated by the signpost.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / VERANDA -- AFTERNOON

JENNY, RAJIV, ROBBY, STELLA, BRANDON, SARAH and MIKE sit
 in the light of the afternoon sun around some beers at the
 end of one of the abandoned tables.

RAJIV
 It is a little district town, not
 very far from here.

ROBBY
 Naurok?

RAJIV
 It's much closer than Safari.

JENNY
 Mike has to drive there and refuel
 the car.

BRANDON
 They have a gas station?

JENNY

Probably.

ROBBY

You're not sure?

Jenny turns to Rajiv.

RAJIV

For sure we do not have enough petrol to reach Safari Lodge, I checked that, and I didn't find any supplies on the premises. So Mike has to drive to Naurok to refuel.

BRANDON

So, why can't we come along with him?

RAJIV

In case there's no filling station or it is out of gas Mike has to wait till one of the lodges' fuel trucks passes, probably tomorrow morning.

SARAH

Couldn't we stay in a hotel?

RAJIV

In Naurok?

SARAH

Maybe better than this place.

RAJIV

Believe me, this here is the better place.

JENNY

Hotels in Naurok, if there are any, would be very dirty, for western standards.

SARAH

I see...

JENNY

Now, if things work out, Mike can be even back in an hour and we move on to Safari.

RAJIV

If we want to.

ROBBY

Or we stay here and enjoy ourselves.
(takes a zip of his
beer)
I kind of like the place.

Jenny looks from him - to Stella

MIKE

Any more questions?

ROBBY

If you return timely, I mean from this Naurok place: could you bring some more beers?

BRANDON

Yeah, and this chicken stuff we had the other night, that you eat with your fingers.

(to Sarah)

What was it called again?

JENNY

Gizzards?

BRANDON

Maybe. And we could fill the pool and all have a swim, if we stay here. The pump is working.

MIKE

On what?

BRANDON

I don't know. Fuel.

MIKE

(to Rajiv)

There's fuel for the water pump?

RAJIV

I checked it, it's useless for the mini bus.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOW -- AFTERNOON

ROBBY enters with some bedclothes. He hangs it over the back of a chair - has a closer look at the room's fittings and furnishings - examines the mattress for solidness.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOW - BATHROOM -- AFTERNOON

ROBBY checks the flush, turns the shower's faucets.

No water.

On the point of leaving, he discovers something on his face in the mirror over the sink.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOW -- AFTERNOON

Bedclothes hanging over the back of a chair in front of uncovered mattress - the bathroom door behind this frames ROBBY, fiddling at his face in front of the mirror over the sink.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOW -- AFTERNOON

ROBBY comes out of the bungalow's door, bedclothes hanging over his right forearm.

He peeks into another bungalow's window, and - apparently not content with what he sees through there - moves on, the moving field of vision impalpably with him...

INT. HIPPO LODGE / FURTHER BUNGALOW -- AFTERNOON

STELLA sees something through the window, quickly disappears into the bathroom.

The door opens, ROBBY enters, hangs the bedclothes over a chair - examines the mattress...

Checking the room's further fittings and furnishings he eventually disappears into the bathroom.

COMMOTION and GIGGLE can be heard from there.

Robby comes out of the bathroom, picks up the bedclothes and prepares to cover the mattress with it.

Stella appears in the bathroom's doorway, leans against the frame in contemplation of Robby's performance.

As he straightens up from the made bed, she goes up to him, puts her arm around his neck.

Robby gives in - then again tries to detach himself of adhering Stella...

EXT. NATIONAL PARK / HIPPO LODGE - ENTRANCE GATE -- AFTERNOON

MARIA sees, about a kilometer away, the freestanding arc of Hippo Lodge's entrance - behind it, in some distance, the contours of the compound.

A vehicle approaches from there, faster and faster, the mini bus, now speeding through the arc.

MARIA

(to herself)

Oh no, they're leaving. - He!

She runs towards the vehicle, waving.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS AT HIPPO LODGE' ENTRANCE GATE -- AFTERNOON

MIKE behind the steering wheel, hearing LOUD MUSIC.

A gazelle runs away from his approach.

EXT. NATIONAL PARK / HIPPO LODGE - ENTRANCE GATE -- AFTERNOON

MARIA disposes of her backpack to be faster.

MARIA
 (running in the
 direction of the
 the car)

He!

The mini bus tears away, leaving a cloud of dust behind him.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Shoooot!

She stops running - draws breath...

MARIA (CONT'D)

(cupping her hands
 around her mouth)

Bastards!

She looks around - discovers her backpack. As she's about to go up to it she twists her ankle.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Ouch!

She HISSSES through her teeth, bends her knees...

...straightens up again and hobbles towards her backpack.

It's turned over. As she picks it up, things fall out of it onto the ground. Irritated, she puts it down again and starts to gather them up.

In the middle of the action she involuntarily stops - as if to prick up her ears...

She's in the moving field of vision of a **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA** at half-height.

Maria resumes her picking up of the pieces that fell out of the backpack, closes the lid and puts it on her back again.

The **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA** follows her as she moves in the direction of Hippo Lodge's compound.

Maria stops. The **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA** takes the cover of some thicket. She turns around, scrutinizes the environs around her...

...then marches on.

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA goes after her again.

Maria's face - seems aware of some pursuit - keeps on looking / moving straight ahead - as if she can make it go away by not turning her eyes to it.

But then she m u s t...

...turn her eyes to i t.

She looks into the **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA** - her seems face moved, somehow touched by what she sees.

The **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA** comes forward and - for the fraction of a second - something **SWISHES** through its field of vision, leaving a scarlet stripe on Maria's forearm.

Almost astonished, she cradles it. Blood pours forth between her fingers.

SWISH...

Maria starts running - **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA** on her heels!

She runs - into a flock of zebras that scatter in all direction from her onslaught.

She looks around, stumbles - falls...

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA comes all over her, **SWISHES** turn her body into a bloody heap of twitching flesh.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / SWIMMING POOL -- AFTERNOON

BRANDON takes a run-up and lands, splashing between the squeaking SARAH and ROBBY, in the pool (now full of water).

STELLA, JENNY and RAJIV sit on restored sun-loungers at the pool's side.

Brandon's body comes to the surface and floats lifeless.

SARAH

Brandon...

She moves up to him, full of fear, as the the body revives and attacks her. Brandon and Sarah mock-fight.

Robby leaves the pool and joins Stella on her sun-lounger.

Brandon and Sarah embrace.

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA observes the scene from half-height.

Sarah wrests herself from Brandon's embrace, looks around in apprehension.

BRANDON

(noticing her
disconcertment)

What...?

She whispers something in his ear.

He looks around a well. But he doesn't seem to notice anything. Turns back to her. Splashes some water in her face.

Sarah turns away.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 (takes her by the
 shoulder)
 He...

SARAH
 Leave me alone.

BRANDON
 There's nothing. Just Robby, staring
 at us.
 (to Robby)
 Or have you noticed anything funny
 around here?

Something hits Brandon's head, rebounds from it - SPLASH -
 into the water.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 (rubbing his head)
 Fuck!

RUSTLING pulls his gaze in the direction where the throw
 must have come from: tree top above the pool.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Bloody Baboons!

He dives to the pool's ground, picks up from there the
 object that hit him at the head, resurfaces and throws it
 into the treetop.

SHRIEKING.

Something SPLASHES into the water next to Brandon.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Wait!

He heaves himself out of the pool and runs to an area of
 gravel and/or pebbles.

He picks up some of them, throws them into the treetop.

RUSTLE from there...

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Get out of there! Little fuckers!

He spots a rather big pebble, picks it up, takes a big
 swing and hurls it with all his might into the tree top.

A terrible SHRIEK, followed by agitated RUSTLING.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 (to Robby)
 This is fun!

Robby, animated by the sight, joins Brandon in throwing
 more stones.

The leaves of the tree top swish as it swallows the stones.

Robby and Brandon pause. DEAD SILENCE.

Sarah climbs timidly out of the pool, takes her towel from the sun-lounger as they observe the, now, stock-still top of the tree.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

They're po'd.

ROBBY

Riff-raff.

SARAH

You killed them?

BRANDON

There!

A STUMPY LITTLE FIGURE can be seen - for the fraction of a second - disappearing around the corner.

Brandon and Robby toss their stony bullets, pick up new ones and start in pursuit.

There're blood traces at the corner toward which they hurtle.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE -- AFTERNOON

Storming around the corner, BRANDON runs into a black man in uniform (RANGER) - ROBBY, following suit, crashes into them.

RANGER

*[vernacular]!

He pushes the white men away.

Robby and Brandon come round, notice a jeep parked in the background. From the open door shines forth the emblem of the Kenya Wildlife Service.

BRANDON

(angry)

Have you - have you seen a bloody monkey?

RANGER

Monkey?

BRANDON

Yeah.

(to Robby)

What's it called?

ROBBY

Baboon.

BRANDON
(to ranger)
Yeah, have you seen it?

RANGER
Baboons are apes, not monkeys.

Notices the stones in Brandon's hand.

RANGER (CONT'D)
Were you throwing stones at a
baboon, sir?

RAJIV
(coming around the
corner with Stella)
What's the problem, officer?

RANGER
Are you with these people?

JENNY
They're our guests. Is there
anything we can do for you?

RANGER
I shall arrest your guests here.

BRANDON
What?

RAJIV
On what charges?

RANGER
Poaching and cruelty to animals.

JENNY
I think, this is maybe a
misunderstanding.

RANGER
What's your business being here?

JENNY
Our car ran low on gas. The driver's
at Naurok this very moment to
refuel. We remained here to stay
overnight in case the Naurok haul
protracts. We didn't encounter any
management. If you can indicate us
where, we're willing to pay for
everything.

RANGER
The place shut down some years
ago.

RAJIV
Maybe we can settle then with you.

RANGER
My responsibility's only poaching
and cruelty to animals.

RAJIV
What would be the fine?

The ranger throws him a glance.

LATER

The ranger's jeep drives off into the evening sun.

JENNY
(putting away her
purse)
Next time, you ask me before you
meddle with a wild animal in the
park.

BRANDON
But he attacked us.

JENNY
Who.

BRANDON
The baboon.

JENNY
Have you seen him?

BRANDON
Why...

JENNY
We better apprehend him now, or he
may get back at us later.

SARAH
You mean, when we sleep?

INT. HIPPO LODGE -- EVENING

JENNY-RAJIV, STELLA-ROBBY, SARAH-BRANDON search through
the facility's interior in teams.

A lamp sends its beam from Jenny's hand into the decreasing
light.

It sweeps the decaying hallways, features and fittings of
the abandoned lodge...

INT. HIPPO LODGE / KITCHEN -- EVENING

SARAH follows BRANDON who snoops through the kitchen
equipment, a huge ladle in its uplifted right.

BRANDON
 (pointing to the
 ground)
 There!

SARAH
 What?

BRANDON
 Blood.

Traces in the twilight - leading to a steely storage cabinet.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 (hissing to Sarah)
 He's in here!

SARAH
 Let's get out of here.

BRANDON
 Wait...

SARAH
 I'm leaving!

She goes for the door - SHRIEKS, as a FURRY SOMETHING flits over her feet there, darts back to Brandon, clings to his muscular shoulders.

From there she observes, trembling, how he wrests open the storage cabinet's sliding door.

Darkness gapes in the aperture. Brandon clubs into it, several times, with the ladle.

A bunch of cans tumbles out, on him and Sarah.

He picks up one of them.

BRANDON
 Yummie, corned beef!
 (lets the can drop
 again)
 There's maybe more of them.

He reaches into the cabinet - is suddenly pulled into it, deeper, deeper. Sarah starts to SCREAM.

The kitchen door flies open, RAJIV and ROBBY dart in, grab Brandon.

He starts to laugh, shakes them off.

SARAH
 (comprehending the
 practical joke)
 Oh, you...!

She strikes at Brandon.

BRANDON

Help me, help! Monster attack!

EXT. NATIONAL PARK -- EVENING

A majestic elevation surmounts the savanna and its wild animals in the dusk.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / CENTRAL DINING ROOM -- DUSK

In the light of two gas lanterns JENNY, STELLA, ROBBY, SARAH and BRANDON munch an improvised meal from the the kitchen cupboard's stock.

RAJIV comes with a beer crate.

RAJIV

See what I found in the shed.

ROBBY

Hallelujah!

Crown caps WHIZ off the bottles.

BRANDON

(taking his bottle
from the mouth)

Wonder if Mike's still coming tonight.

JENNY

(checks her mobil)

I tried to call him a couple of times, but...

THE OTHERS

...dead zone!

They CLINK bottles.

ROBBY

(checking his phone)

Wait, I think I got a message.

RAJIV

What's it say?

ROBBY

(lets sink the
telephone)

Battery's too weak.

BRANDON

Isn't there electricity here, a generator?

RAJIV

I saw one behind the shed.

BRANDON

Why didn't you power it up?

RAJIV
Was still light outside.

BRANDON
Could have used it to charge our
mobiles...

JENNY
(to Rajiv)
You could try to power it up now.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / GENERATOR -- DUSK

RAJIV rankles with the rusty generator.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE -- NIGHT

Occasional lights flare up in the compound's buildings. A soft PUTTER's becomes audible with this.

ROBBY, beer bottle in hands, twirls around himself.

ROBBY
(arms stretched out)
There shall be light!

A GIGGLE gets his attention.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / SWIMMING POOL -- NIGHT

SARAH and BRANDON frolic in the swimming pool.

ROBBY, observing them, catches (very short) sight of a "crouched movement" on one of the nearby bungalows' porches.

He doesn't pay attention - eventually retires in one of the other bungalow.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / FURTHER BUNGALOW -- NIGHT

ROBBY collapses on the bed.

The skimpy curtains in front of the window, barely noticeable, move.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOW -- NIGHT

BRANDON and SARAH storm into their abode, start to make out on the bed.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / LOBBY -- NIGHT

JENNY prepares the seating corners for preliminary resting places, as STELLA comes with two beers from the kitchen quarters.

JENNY
We're waiting here for Mike.

Stella pretends she hasn't heard, passes Jenny.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Stella!

STELLA

(innocently)

Yes?

JENNY

Where do you want to go?

STELLA

Breathing in some fresh air.

JENNY

You stay.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOW -- NIGHT

BRANDON and SARAH are making love.

SARAH

Wait.

BRANDON

What?

She wants to take of her high heeled sandals.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

No! Leave them on.

SARAH

You pervert.

BRANDON

Yeah. Sit on my face...

EXT. HIPPO LODGE -- NIGHT

RAJIV crosses the forecourt.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / LOBBY -- NIGHT

Entering from the forecourt, RAJIV sees JENNY and STELLA disputing.

STELLA

*[something that sounds like a
curse in vernacular]

JENNY

I don't understand Gikuju.
(she notices Rajiv)
Rajiv, she...

RAJIV

(not amused)
I know.

STELLA

What?

RAJIV

Can I have one of these beers?

As Stella isn't prepared to offer it to him, he takes one of the bottles from her hand. Gets out his key and snaps off the crown cap with it.

He takes a gulp.

RAJIV (CONT'D)

Stella, he's engaged, his fiancée practically with us...

STELLA

She's not here.

JENNY

Leave him alone, as a favor to us.

RAJIV

She's not gonna do us a favor.

He sloshes Stella.

JENNY

Rajiv!

RAJIV

That's the only language she'll understand.

Jenny gets in his way.

JENNY

Leave her alone!

RAJIV

What do you want?

JENNY

I'll solve the problem. My way.

She comforts Stella who, unseen by Jenny, casts a malicious glance at Rajiv.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOW - BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Nude SARAH comes in, about to squat on the toilet bowl. She hesitates, has a look first.

The sight of the bowl fails to instill sufficient confidence in Sarah to make use of it.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOW -- NIGHT

SARAH rushes to the door.

BRANDON

Heh, where you're going?

SARAH
To pee somewhere!

She leaves the door open...

BRANDON
(to himself)
The princess and the pea.

He gets up.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOW - BATHROOM -- NIGHT

The ray of BRANDON's urine soils the toilet bowl even farther.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOW -- NIGHT

BRANDON throws himself on the bed again. He looks over to the door.

It seems to have changed its blade's angle.

BRANDON
Sarah?

He sits up, seems for a moment prepared to go and check. Then he leans back again, lying flat on his back.

A Masai spear explodes through his throat.

It gleams steaming red in the indirect light coming from the door.

Brandon's eyes are broken.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / LOBBY -- NIGHT

RAJIV observes JENNY talking to STELLA.

JENNY
Okay, what do you want?

STELLA
I want to sleep in my own bed.

JENNY
What's wrong with this?

She gestures to the seating corners she prepared for preliminary resting places.

STELLA
Why you want me to use these?

JENNY
Mike can come back any minute.

STELLA
Yeah?

JENNY

I want everybody in calling
distance.

STELLA

He's not coming back before tomorrow
morning.

JENNY

Then we'll sleep here.

STELLA

You just want to keep an eye on
me.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / IN FRONT OF BUNGALOW -- NIGHT

SARAH squats, only dressed with her high heeled sandals,
in the shadow of some bushes.

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA approaches her from behind.

SARAH looks over her shoulder. Her face distorts.

She must see something terrible!

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. HIPPO LODGE / LOBBY -- NIGHT

JENNY

(to Stella)

Okay, you don't have to stay here
with me, I trust you.

(she checks with
Rajiv)

But you have to promise me that
you go to your own bungalow.

(beat)

Is that understood?

Stella nods. Rajiv looks at Jenny derisively.

STELLA

Can I go now?

Jenny nods. Stella gets moving.

JENNY

Where're you going.

STELLA

To the kitchen. Maybe there's
another beer.

She disappears in the hallway to the kitchen quarters.

RAJIV
 (after her)
 Bring one for me too!
 (to Jenny)
 You really think she'll abide?

JENNY
 At least it'll not be my fault.

She settles herself in the seating corners she prepared for resting places.

JENNY (CONT'D)
 You think Mike's still coming tonight?

RAJIV
 I doubt it.

JENNY
 (sighs)
 I'll wait here.

EXT./INT. MINI BUS IN THE NATIONAL PARK -- NIGHT

MIKE steers the mini bus through the night.

The earth road jumps into the cones of the headlights with sudden gaps, faults and slips.

Flushed animals move out of the way.

On the back seats bound supplies (food and drinks that must have been bought in Naurok).

The carved little hippo bobs from its hanger, up and down...

EXT. HIPPO LODGE -- NIGHT

STELLA hushes, two bottles of beer under her arm, through the night.

The generator PUTTERS in the distance, supplying selective lighting.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOWS -- NIGHT

STELLA works her way forward to the bungalows, huddled in semi-darkness.

Her see-sawing gaze signals uncertainty as to which one to enter.

She approaches the nearest, tries the door - disappears inside.

STELLA (O.S.)
 Robby?

A muffled SMACKING (sound) comes through the distant PUTTER, followed by a kind of MOAN.

Stella's head peaks out of the doorway.

She cocks her ears.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Robby?

EXT./INT. MINI BUS IN THE NATIONAL PARK -- NIGHT

MIKE steers to the left, evading a gap, as the front wheels CRASH into another one.

Mike pulls the mini bus to the opposite side.

EXT. NATIONAL PARK / TRACK -- NIGHT

The mini bus swerves, develops a list and is bogged down.

The tires are spinning - finally stop.

MIKE climbs out of the car.

MIKE

(kicking against
the tire)

Shit.

Headlights bob closer, a vehicle pulls over to the side of the track. A SHADOW descends from it, switching on a blinding flashlight.

RANGER

Hi. Any problem?

MIKE

You can say that again.

RANGER

How can I help?

MIKE

Maybe got a tow rope?

Black hands search the jeep's tool trunk.

RANGER

(straightening up)

No tow rope. Back at the base.

MIKE

We could try the lodge first. I've seen a tool shed there.

RANGER

Which lodge?

MIKE

Hippo Lodge. It may be closer.

RANGER

So you're the guy who went for gas
to Naurok?

MIKE

(surprised that the
ranger knows)

Yes...

RANGER

I was at Hippo couple of hours
ago.

MIKE

Everybody okay?

RANGER

They're waiting for you.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOWS -- NIGHT

STELLA tiptoes over to a bungalow. Steps on the veranda.

A CREAKING makes her turn round quickly.

Its source is the door of an opposite bungalow. It stands
open, invitingly.

STELLA

(trusting)

Robby...

INT. HIPPO LODGE / FURTHER BUNGALOW -- NIGHT

STELLA slips into the room, becoming aware of human contours
under the bed's sheets.

STELLA

I brought us some beers!

She holds up the bottles, deposits them on the bedside
table.

STELLA (CONT'D)

You want to have some now?

Now answer.

STELLA (CONT'D)

We have some later.

She gets out of her clothes.

STELLA (CONT'D)

That specky four-eyes wanted to
keep me with her in the lobby. But
I showed her from where the wind
is blowing.

She lifts the sheets, slips under them.

She snuggles up to ROBBY who stares at the ceiling.
Stella licks-kisses his nipples. Robby does not react.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Giving me the silent treatment,
eh? - Wait...

She reaches down between his legs.

Her face shows perplexity - concern - then alarm, as she pulls up her hand...

...holding Robby's bloody penis.

Stella SCREAMS.

Something swishes down on her with a SMACK.

Curtains fly softly - PATTERNING on the floor.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / LOBBY -- NIGHT

JENNY comes over to her mobile phone on the desk. A thin cable leads from its charger connector to a charger in a wall socket.

Jenny checks the...

CLOSE

...battery's charge.

Puts the mobile down again, then moves over to RAJIV who dozed off in an armchair.

JENNY
Rajiv?

She shakes him up.

RAJIV
Eh...!

JENNY
What's that noise?

She looks around. He gets up a bit, cocks his ears.

Soft PUTTERING.

RAJIV
The generator.

JENNY
No, there's something else.

A strange RATTLING sounds through the generator's soft PUTTER.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE -- NIGHT

JENNY and RAJIV go across the forecourt looking about and around - then walk walk over to the bungalows, huddled in semi-darkness.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / BUNGALOWS -- NIGHT

They hesitate for a moment which one to enter.

JENNY tries the nearest, opens the door - disappears inside.

JENNY (O.S.)

Anybody?

A muffled CRUNCHING (sound) comes through the generator's PUTTER, followed by a kind of DRAGGING sound.

A lion ROARS in the distance

Jenny's head peaks out of the doorway.

RAJIV cocks his ears.

RAJIV

Over here.

She comes to him, and they tiptoe to another bungalow. Step on the veranda.

Jenny holds Rajiv by the arm.

JENNY

(pointing to the
bungalow kitty-
corner)

That's Robby's!

RAJIV

How you know?

JENNY

You'll see.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / FURTHER BUNGALOW -- NIGHT

JENNY appears in the door. RAJIV peaks over her shoulder.

RAJIV

There's nobody.

From their point of view the room looks empty, the bed stands uninhabited in the dark.

Jenny turns away.

JENNY (O.S.)

Where's he got to this time?

At the corner of the bed a bloody little bulge is covered by the sheets.

EXT. HIPPO LODGE / IN FRONT OF BUNGALOW -- NIGHT

The place where Sarah squatted to pee is deserted.

RAJIV kneels in the shadow of the bushes and picks up some item.

JENNY

What is it?

He shows a slightly soiled high heeled sandal to her. Jenny probes the impurity on the sandal with her finger. Smells the tip.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(to Rajiv)

You think that could be blood?

He follows suit.

RAJIV

I don't know. Could be.

JENNY

(into the darkness)

Sarah! You hear me?

Rajiv shows to the open door of a near bungalow. Over the veranda's guard railing two t-shirts are hanging to dry: Sarah's and Brandon's.

Rajiv goes to the door and checks.

RAJIV

(over the shoulder)

Nobody inside.

JENNY

Go and look in the bathroom.

Rajiv disappears in the bungalow while Jenny looks about and around.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(loud)

He! Can anybody hear me? Robby!

Come over here, if you hear me!

Sarah! Brandon!

A shadow appears in the bungalow's door, steps forward and shapes up as - Rajiv.

RAJIV

The place is deserted.

JENNY

Better call the police.

RAJIV

Out here?

JENNY
The Wildlife people - rangers...

INT. HIPPO LODGE / LOBBY -- NIGHT

Cable is pulled from the charger connector of Jenny's mobile. JENNY presses the power/call key. Lifts the phone to her ear.

JENNY
(after several
seconds)
Come on....

RAJIV
Dead zone?

RAJIV wants to take the mobile from her ears, but she fends him off, changing position to get a better signal.

JENNY
(looking around)
Wouldn't they even have a RT unit
in a place like this?

RAJIV
You mean "have had"..

JENNY
We still could look for it. Where
would it have been?

RAJIV
The office, probably...

She takes down the mobile.

JENNY
Police's dead. I try Mike...

INT./EXT. NATIONAL PARK / JEEP -- NIGHT

MIKE's mobile rings as he sways next to the RANGER on the jeep's front passenger seat through the night.

MIKE
(into the mobile)
Kovacs.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / LOBBY -- NIGHT

JENNY
(into mobile)
Mike!

INT./EXT. NATIONAL PARK / JEEP -- NIGHT

RANGER just operates the vehicle's RT unit.

RADIO MESSAGE
*[vernacular...]

MIKE
 (into mobile)
 I'm on my way, almost there!

RANGER
 (into RT)
 *[vernacular]

MIKE
 (into mobile)
 Our bus ran off the track. Rangers
 will help me to pull it out. We
 just come to get a tow rope.

RANGER
 (into RT)
 *[vernacular - excited!]

MIKE
 We'll be there in a minute. Don't
 worry.

Cuts off the call.

RANGER
 (turning to him)
 There's an emergency, I have to
 attend, right away!

MIKE
 But Hippo Lodge is over there!

RANGER
 I can let you out here or you come
 with me.

MIKE
 Who's gonna pull me out now?

RANGER
 I'll come after I attended to the
 emergency.

MIKE
 To the lodge?

RANGER
 To Hippo. You want to come with
 me, or I let you out here?

EXT. NATIONAL PARK / HIPPO LODGE - ENTRANCE GATE -- NIGHT

The jeep stops near the freestanding arc. MIKE alights.
 The jeep turns around and speeds off.

The contours of Hippo Lodge in the distance - even the
 GENERATOR can be heard faintly.

Mike gets moving.

He's in the field of vision of a **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA** at half-height. It follows him as she strides in the direction of Hippo Lodge's compound.

Mike stops. He turns around, scrutinizes the environs around him - then marches on.

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA goes after him.

Suddenly he turns around, looks into the **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA**. He hunkers down, reaches out for it.

The **SUBJECTIVE CAMERA** comes forward, almost trusting. Then something lashes through Mike's face, tearing a scarlet furrow through it.

Mike falls backwards.

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA comes all over him, turning his face into a bloody grimace.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. HIPPO LODGE / LOBBY -- NIGHT

Lights go out, as the GENERATOR dies down. JENNY and RAJIV come up from their seats.

Jenny looks around alarmed in the dark.

RAJIV
Generator probably ran out of fuel.

JENNY
You're sure?

RAJIV
I better check before...

JENNY
Don't!

RAJIV
What?

JENNY
Don't leave me alone here.

RAJIV
Come on, it's just behind the kitchen. I'm back in a second.

JENNY
I come with you!

RAJIV
Okay, if you want to.

They get going.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / KITCHEN -- NIGHT

JENNY follows RAJIV through the kitchen towards the back door.

The fittings loom in the dark.

Just as Rajiv opens the backdoor, Jenny's mobile phone makes itself heard.

Jenny pulls it out. It sips out of her shaking hands, sliding under a cupboard.

JENNY

Oh no!

She kneels down, sees the lightened display, has to reach under the cupboard - her arm disappears up to the shoulder - to pull it out.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(looking at the display)

Mike...

She pushes the key, lifts her mobile to his ear.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Mike?

A STRANGE SOUND can be heard.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Mike?

EXT. NATIONAL PARK -- NIGHT

CLOSE

Mike's mobile on the ground, RODENTS run over the pad, eventually typing keys, on their way to...

...feast on Mike's blood-soaked body.

One rodent's claw hits the power key, and the mobile goes off.

INT. HIPPO LODGE / KITCHEN -- NIGHT

The display light from JENNY's hand goes out.

JENNY

Shit...

She lets the hand with the mobile phone fall. Looks up to the kitchen back door.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Rajiv?

Frightened, she gets up from her crouching position.

CLIMAX IN NARRATIVE FORM

Jenny looks for Rajiv outside, eventually finds his motionless body in the swimming pool. As she tries to pull him towards her to see if he can be reanimated, she sees that his throat has been ripped. She flees in panic, stumbles over the corpses of Robby and Setlla.

She barricades herself in the kitchen, tries to call help with her mobile phone. But her stay in the pool's water has made it useless.

Through the window she sees a frail old woman making her way clumsily with a torn basket through the moonlight. The crone knocks at the kitchen door, wants to sell some souvenirs from her basket. Recognizing a mobile phone dangling from the obviously crazy old woman's belt, Jenny lets her in.

Jenny frantically tells her story, first in English, then, as the crone does not seem to understand, in Swahili. The old woman uses her mobile to call for help. She then explains Jenny that this place sure enough is cursed since her little son lost both his legs 15 years ago trying to sell some souvenirs at the gate to a drunken load of youngsters who knocked him down with their mini bus and then let him lie untreated one whole night.

FLASHBACK Little back boy with broken legs, whimpering in the moonlight - staring up to a wooden tableau of a carved hippo, its graved jaws opening into the moonlight.

Both his legs had to be amputated, the mother croaks to Jenny. Since then he walks on stumps and landed himself with the nickname "hippo" since he's still amazingly fast.

Jenny becomes aware of a stocky appearance emerging from the shadows - a DWARFED MUSCULAR MAN WHOSE FACE IS HIDDEN BY A HIPPO-MASK. His leg stumps are clad in leather. From the Masai weapon in his hand drops blood.

Jenny instinctively puts a kitchen knife at his mother's throat, threatening to kill her if he doesn't retire into the pantry. There she shuts him up. Then she throws the key away, pushes the old woman away and runs outside.

At the gate she stumbles over the corpses of Maria and Mike. In panic, Jenny heads for the tool shed to not stay "unarmed".

In the meantime the old woman, after consulting the kitchen key hooks, opens the pantry.

Jenny goes through the tools. She hears the generator starting again, all the lights go on and a stumpy shadow races towards Jenny's hideout.

They're fighting. Jenny can get away by ripping off the hippo-mask and throwing it into the pool.

But as soon as her attacker has fished it out and put it on again, a reckless chase continues.

Back in the main house Jenny stumbles over the corpses of Brandon and Sarah, hides in panic but is tracked down. She knocks down her pursuer.

She runs to the borehole and in a bitter-wily fight ultimately manages that the midget falls in.

After splashing into the water he whines with a children's voice for his mother. As she approaches Jenny slays her with the weapon she wrested from her son's cloddish hands.

At dawn the ranger show up. He takes care of Jenny. Suddenly the hippo-man shoots out of the borehole and grasps her.

She wakes up from a nightmare. Is in hospital. She's told that she is the only survivor.

When she sees a hippo on a baby's bib in the hospital hallway, she freaks out.

END