

INNERSTATE 70

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

We SEE MAXINE (MAX) RAMIREZ (17), a pathologically shy, slovenly dressed Latina in short-cropped hair and glasses, driving an old pickup truck toward a small town on the eastern Colorado plains. She swerves and drives poorly.

We see the town's welcoming sign that reads: "Welcome to Chapman, Colorado." Someone has hand-painted a town motto -- "The other parts of Colorado are prettier." [It's really named Lamar, Colorado]

EXT. BURGER PLACE - NIGHT

Max collects a milkshake from the drive-up window, hiding her face from the Cashier (18). She drives around to the empty parking lot, proud of her accomplishment. She tries unsuccessfully to sip the milkshake, but it's frozen thick.

MAX

Too thick, again!

(angry)

Wish I could leave this place!

Max takes off the plastic lid, and can't even stir the near-froze milkshake. She shakes her head in disgust.

The backdoor of the restaurant opens, and pulling a large plastic garbage can is BRANDON LANGLEY (18), whose filthy apron matches his shabby clothes and long, ratty hair, poorly concealed by his hairnet.

Max turns to watch Brandon drag the heavy can across the parking lot to a dumpster.

Brandon gets to the dumpster, lifts out the plastic trash bag, and the bottom of the bag breaks apart spilling wet, stinky garbage all over him.

Brandon looks around.

Max quickly turns to look away, and she squeezes her milkshake cup too hard, and half of it spills in her lap.

MAX (CONT'D)

Damnit!

She looks in the rearview mirror, while trying to clean up the milkshake with one wimpy paper napkin.

Brandon stomps back to the backdoor, and finds it locked. He pounds on the door. He's furious.

BRANDON

Really, guys? Third time this month?

(anger turns to sadness)

Graduation day?

(deeply depressed)

Tell Harlan, I quit!

INT./EXT. BRANDON'S HOUSE - DAY

The inside of the dump of a house looks near empty. Brandon smiles big as he walks from his bedroom to the kitchen with a GoPro camera on a selfie-stick interviewing himself. Brandon has a small backpack on, and he carries a sleeping bag under his arm.

BRANDON

This is Brandon Langley, about to embark on the epic adventure of a lifetime.

Brandon stops at a photo of his parents. His dad (40), unshaven, holds a shovel. His hefty mom (40) holds a mop.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Pop promised me when I turned eighteen, he was going to give me a ham sandwich and a roadmap.

(beat)

Went out for a carton of cigarettes a few years ago and never came back. Ma still cleans at the county hospital, and I'll call when I can.

Brandon has a note already written for his mom, which reads: "Ma, I'll call when I can. Love ya, Brandon." He drops the note on the table where we SEE a ROAD MAP of Colorado, with a thick purple marker showing the route from Chapman to Burlington to Grand Junction, Colorado; across the state on Interstate 70. There is also a HAM SANDWICH on the table. He picks it up, smiles, and heads out the door.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Ah! White privilege! Let's go pick up my new car, and meet my Craigslist traveling companion. Can't be too careful, ya know.

EXT. USED-CAR LOT - DAY

Max sits on the curb outside a dingy used-car lot with a backpack and sleeping bag. She interviews herself with a GoPro on a selfie-stick. She SEES Brandon down the street.

MAX

Dumbest idea ever, right? I know it's Brandon Langley, informally voted least likely to succeed in our graduating class of 86 kids, but he doesn't know it's me answering his Craigslist ad. He signed the ad "Brandon L., recent high school grad." It's not that big of a town, Brandon! I signed mine, Max R.," not Maxine. He said all I needed was \$100 cash, a sleeping bag, and a GoPro camera to document the epic journey of a lifetime along Innerstate 70!

(snickers)

Innerstate 70? It's Interstate 70, and from one side to the other of Colorado only takes nine hours!

(beat)

He's an idiot! We were in high school together for four years, and even he didn't talk to me.

(beat)

Never been out of the county. I gotta get out -- even if we're back by tomorrow night!

Brandon strolls toward Max until he sees her sleeping bag, backpack, and GoPro camera. He's furious.

BRANDON

You're not Max! You're Maxine!
Maxine Ramirez! Informally voted "Least Popular Girl" in school!
You're not setting foot in my new '61 Corvette!

Used-car Salesman, HARRY (55), over-weight and smiling, races up in a *1984 Chrysler LeBaron convertible*, washed, but dented. He slams on the squeaky brakes. The car rattles and coughs.

HARRY
She's a real beauty.

Harry whips out a clipboard and pen. Max mumbles.

MAX
'61 Corvette?

BRANDON
That's what I'm calling her! My '61 Corvette.

HARRY
Initial here, here, and here, and sign here.

BRANDON
What am I initialing? I paid you yesterday!

Brandon initials and signs, glaring at Max.

HARRY
She's as is. Dashboard lights are in, just like you wanted. Two very minor issues. Broken fuel gauge, always reads full; and iffy water pump, but you knew that. I knocked off fifty bucks. You two lovebirds should have a hell of an epic road trip.
(laughs)
Innerstate 70, here you come!

Harry sees that Max is disappointed by the car.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Always remember, kids, it's not how others see you. It's how they see you in a brand new used car!

Brandon smiles proudly at his new car.

MAX
(mumbles)
I see myself making a big mistake.

Harry chuckles and shakes his head as he walks away. Max throws her stuff in the back of the car, and hops in.

Brandon glares at Max, but gets in and drives slowly out of the lot to the main street to the tune of "Route 66."

The engine stalls. He starts it again. He smiles proudly as Max looks away.

BRANDON
Innerstare 70, here we come!

EXT. COUNTY ROAD - DAY

Brandon and Max drive without speaking. We HEAR the theme music to Route 66 in the b.g.

BRANDON
Might be dangerous.

Max looks away.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
I might take side trips like on that old TV show, Route 66.

Max ignores him.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
We'll stop at exciting, adventurous, and often dangerous places along the way. Did I mention dangerous?

Max glances at Brandon long enough to roll her eyes in disgust.

Brandon turns on his GoPro camera, extends the selfie-stick and interviews himself with Max beside him.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
My Gramps told me about this TV show when I was a kid. Tod Stiles and Buz Murdock traveled Route 66, worked odd jobs along the way, and had adventures and shit!

Max yawns. Brandon is serious.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
I never been more than twenty-five miles out of Chapman my whole life. I just want to see the rest of the world.

Max looks at Brandon. She sees he's sincere.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
You were the girl that never smiled
and never talked.

Max turns angry and looks away again.

MAX
Take me home.

Brandon slams on the squeaky brakes in the middle of the two-lane road, and turns to Max.

BRANDON
Why didn't you smile or talk? Ever!

Max refuses to answer. A big truck is heading down the road towards them. Max is furious.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Why didn't you smile or talk?

The truck gets closer.

The car engine dies. They both panic. Brandon tries to start the car, but it won't start. The truck nears and honks its horn.

Max grabs her stuff and leaps out of the car, racing to the side of the road.

The car still won't start. Max mumbles.

MAX
Get out of there, you idiot!

BRANDON
I can't! It's everything I own. I'm serious.

MAX
(yells)
You're gonna be dead!

The car starts in the nick of time. The truck swerves to miss Brandon. Max flips the truck driver off.

BRANDON
(laughs)
Least you're talking to me.

They continue down the road.

MAX
You're crazy?

BRANDON
Never call me that!
(beat)
Why didn't you smile or talk?

MAX
Born with a giant, giant space
between my two-front teeth.

BRANDON
Geez!

MAX
I didn't smile 'til we got a female
dentist in town my freshman year.
She knew my folks picked melons and
couldn't pay her, so she paid for
me to get dental implants.

Max smiles briefly at Brandon, then she looks away.

MAX (CONT'D)
(mumbles)
You don't know what it's like to go
through puberty with a big gap
between your teeth.

BRANDON
I know exactly what that's like.

Max turns angrily at Brandon.

MAX
You had a big gap between your
teeth?

BRANDON
No. I went through puberty!
(realizing he was wrong)
Oh! But by then your pattern was
set? You didn't smile or talk, even
after your teeth got fixed?

MAX
Like you getting dumpster duty at
the Burger Giant as a Freshman, and
having Dumpster Duty as a Senior?

Brandon looks away.

BRANDON
So, you became the least popular
girl in school?

MAX

I hated sports, and didn't much care to be a popular tramp or a hated four-point-oh award-winning student, so I made sure I had one "B" every semester.

BRANDON

Me, too.

MAX

(sarcastic)

You got all As and one B?

BRANDON

No, I hated sports.

MAX

Shocking! Going to college in the fall?

BRANDON

CCC. Chapman Community College. My grades weren't the best.

MAX

Equally shocking. But you got the '61 Corvette working for you.

BRANDON

Damn straight, I do!

(beat)

Hey, we gotta record this epic adventure.

Max pulls out her GoPro, turns it on, and extends her selfie-stick.

MAX

History, huh? Right between here and I-70 is the Sand Creek Massacre Site. We should stop in for a quick look. Ten minutes max.

BRANDON

What happened there?

MAX

Couple hundred Indians killed by the Cavalry in 1864. Read a little about it, but I'd like to see it.

BRANDON

How far off our main route is it?

MAX

Ten minutes. Like I said!

BRANDON

Can't afford it. Schedule to keep.

MAX

You said we'd stop at exciting, adventurous, and often dangerous places along the way?

Max looks into the camera and smiles.

BRANDON

First stop on our non-stop epic adventure: The Sand Creek Massacre Site!

LATER

They see a sign to the "Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site," but they turn prematurely onto a dirt road.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Ten minutes off the main road. No problem.

Brandon's car swerves along the dirty, bumpy road.

MAX

Sure this is the right road?

BRANDON

Just following the signs.

On Max's smartphone, we SEE an enlarged MAP of the area which shows Brandon turned too soon.

Max gathers video evidence, as she pulls a water bottle out of her backpack. She takes a sip as Brandon hits a rut in the road, and she spills water all over her lap.

MAX

Again?

BRANDON

Can I have a sip? I feel like Larry of Arabia!

MAX

Lawrence.

BRANDON

If you want to be formal about it.

Max hands Brandon the water bottle as he hits another rut in the road, and water spills onto his lap. He looks down as a big tractor enters the road right ahead of them.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 (looking down)
 Geez!

MAX
 Lookout!

BRANDON
 (looks up)
 Shit!

Brandon slams on the brakes as the tractor fills the dirt road. It looks like a dust storm.

Brandon honks, but the driver of the loud tractor can't hear him. The Tractor Driver (60) in overalls, has earphones on.

Brandon tries to pass, swerving back and forth, to no avail.

MAX
 (sarcastic)
 This is going to make for exciting video.

BRANDON
 Epic adventures are never easy!
 Didn't you see the Hobbit?

MAX
 Read the book. You expecting elves to help you find the gold ring?

The Tractor Driver drops a grader blade by accident, and he creates a bigger dust storm behind the tractor.

Brandon is furious. Max takes a bandana out of her backpack, wraps it around her face below her eyes, laughs, and keeps filming.

BRANDON
 I see how it's going to be!

EXT. SAND CREEK MASSACRE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE - CONTINUOUS

Brandon pulls into the empty parking lot. The car's radiator is steaming hot, so Brandon lifts the hood. Brandon is as hot as the car.

Max pulls off her bandana, and steps out of the car.

A Native American Interpreter, IRVING WILD HORSE (35), dressed in a National Park Service-like volunteer uniform (dark green pants, tan shirt) comes to greet them with a smile. He sees them covered in dust, and that their pants are wet in the crotch. He points. Irving talks in a mild, almost squeaky, voice.

IRVING

Rest rooms are right over there. My name is Irving Wild Horse. I'll be your guide today.

Max and Brandon look at themselves and laugh, a bit embarrassed. They trudge toward the bathrooms.

MAX

(sarcastic)

Exciting, and often dangerous adventures along the way.

Irving races to the headquarters door. He leans in the door with a much stronger voice.

IRVING

Leo, hand me the megaphone. It's wrong, but I'm going to have some fun with these two.

Max and Brandon are much cleaner when they exit the restrooms, and their pants are dry. They grab their backpacks from the car.

They see Irving exiting the Headquarters building with a megaphone in his hands, and a small backpack on. He races up to Brandon and Max, and readies the megaphone to his lips.

IRVING (CONT'D)

Please form a single-file line.

Brandon and Max stare at each other, bewildered. There are no other people around. They both start their GoPro cameras.

Two FACES (30s-40s; one male, one female) appear in the Headquarters building. They are laughing hysterically. Irving uses the megaphone relentlessly for humor.

BRANDON

Single-file?

Irving turns to wink at the Faces in the Headquarters building.

IRVING

Follow me, and keep an eye out for rattlesnakes.

Irving heads up the trail. Brandon and Max follow in single-file looking for snakes. Brandon whispers to Max.

BRANDON

We really do have to get to Innerstate 70. We're on a tight schedule.

Irving turns angrily with his megaphone.

IRVING

Our people lived and died on this land for fourteen-thousand years. Your people have been in this locale for less than two-hundred years. Is it too much to ask for a little of your precious time to remind you of our forgotten ancestors?

Irving turns and takes a step.

MAX

(mumbles)

Won't this be fun.

IRVING

What was that?

MAX

And educational!

Irving runs a short way up the trail, and turns with an evil smile.

IRVING

Imagine if a 14,000-year epic journey led you to place as beautiful as this! Take photos and video, please. Remember this until you rudely delete them forever!

Brandon and Max shrug their shoulders at each other, smirk, and take video of the barren landscape.

BRANDON

We're on a tight schedule.

Irving ignores the teen, and walks further up the trail. The teens follow reluctantly.

IRVING

The plains were a sea of buffalo, deer, antelope, elk, grizzly bears, and wolves -- until the great white hunters killed them with powerful rifles.

(angry)

The native wildlife competed with their precious non-native horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, and chickens.

BRANDON

We served up a good bison burger at the Burger Giant for a year or so, but it was two bucks more.

Irving glares at Brandon.

MAX

We get what you're saying. It was paradise.

IRVING

For the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa, it was their special paradise. It was home.

Max pulls Brandon by the sleeve.

MAX

Your home. We get it. But we should get going.

Irving ignores Max and stands angry and proud.

IRVING

What if your home, or entire home town, was the site of one of the greatest mass-murders in American history?!

Brandon and Max are stunned. Irving laughs maniacally, and walks on. Brandon and Max follow.

IRVING (CONT'D)

Don't look so shocked. It is called a massacre site!

They walk of the trail in silence, until they get to an overlook. Irving uses the megaphone as he reads from the brochure.

IRVING (CONT'D)

The brochure says, "At dawn on November 29, 1864, 675 U.S. volunteer soldiers commanded by Colonel John M. Chivington attacked a village of about 750 Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians along Sand Creek. Using rifle and cannon fire, the troops drove the people out of their camp. Women, children, and the elderly fled to the bottom of the dry stream bed. The soldiers followed, shooting at them as they struggled through the sandy earth."

Brandon and Max can't take their eyes off the barren landscape.

Irving puts away the brochure, and sets down the megaphone.

IRVING (CONT'D)

What are your names?

MAX

I'm Maxine Ramirez. Max.

BRANDON

Brandon Langley. We're from Chapman. Irving doesn't sound Indian?

Irving picks up the megaphone and uses it.

IRVING

Indian, as in, from India?

MAX

I think even he knows better than that.

IRVING

My given name in Cheyenne is Wahanassatta, he who walks with his toes turned outward.

Brandon and Max look at Irving's feet.

IRVING (CONT'D)

It's why I don't wear sandals.

MAX

Ever been to Chapman, an hour south, except if you follow a tractor.

Irving lights up.

IRVING

Chapman High? Home of the Chapman
Savage Warriors?

BRANDON

We don't mean nothin' by it. Just a
mascot.

MAX

Don't apologize, Brandon! The
founders of our town and high
school were bigoted assholes. Not
much has changed.

Irving slowly sets down the megaphone. He points to a spot on
the landscape, and he hops around as he begins to rant like a
madman, while flailing his arms.

IRVING

Over the course of eight hours the
troops killed over 230 Cheyenne and
Arapaho people, most of them women,
children, and the elderly.

Brandon's and Max's jaws drop.

MAX

Black Kettle was a Peace Chief,
wasn't he?

Irving screams and nods 'yes' a dozen times, as he carries
on.

IRVING

Flew an American flag, and white
flag of surrender over his lodge.

Irving acts like a lunatic. Brandon and Max try to capture
Irving on their GoPro cameras, but he doesn't stop moving
around and yelling.

IRVING (CONT'D)

They didn't just kill a peaceful
band on their guaranteed-safe
reservation. They mutilated the
bodies of women and children, and
wore their body parts in a parade
in downtown Denver.

Irving looks away in tears.

IRVING (CONT'D)

I can't do this anymore. I can't.
Two-hundred-thirty defenseless old
men, women, and children in eight
hours, and the soldiers were proud
of themselves!

Max and Brandon try to console Irving, but he's running
around like a madman.

IRVING (CONT'D)

I just can't do this anymore! Where
was the outrage? Where is the
outrage?

Max stares at Brandon, who secretly points to Irving like,
"he's crazy."

Irving looks deranged. He marches back and forth pretending
to shoot at an invisible approaching army. Max and Brandon
try to calm him down.

MAX

Well, Brandon, your '61 Corvette
should be cooled off now.

Irving pauses to glare at Brandon.

IRVING

'61 Corvette? More white man lies!

BRANDON

Except it's a slightly less-
expensive make and model.

Irving raises an invisible bow, and sends invisible arrows
into Brandon and Max.

IRVING

Like Route 66? The endless trail of
fur traders, pioneers, farmers, and
soldiers!

BRANDON

I get it! Okay. We just want to see
the land you lost!

MAX

We're going to drive all the way
across Colorado.

Irving pauses for a moment. Max and Brandon smile, believing
he is settling down, but Irving goes wild again!

IRVING

You have no sense of place.
Chapman, Colorado, home of the
Savage Warriors isn't good enough
for you?

BRANDON

Huh?

IRVING

No sense of place. Our ancestors
had a real sense of place. Devoted
to the earth and sky in one tiny
piece of the Earth.

MAX

One tiny piece?

Irving uses air quotes while ranting.

IRVING

There were over 400 Native American
languages when you so-called
"pilgrims" so-called "discovered"
America.

MAX

How many languages remain?

IRVING

Less than half. Others are going
fast. The genocide and ethnic
cleansing continues!

Irving is more anguished than ever. He stomps further up the
trail.

Max whispers into her GoPro.

MAX

We can't leave him like this!

Max runs after Irving, as Brandon whispers into his GoPro.

BRANDON

I could leave him. Nuttier than a
fruitcake.

Brandon reaches Max who starts to shake and panic.

MAX

If he's that unstable, he shouldn't
be left alone. I... I...

Max races to catch up with Irving.

Brandon shrugs, then catches up to them. Irving speaks without the megaphone, but he still acts unstable.

IRVING

Wasn't the bullets so much as the diseases: small pox, measles, the flu, and a bunch of others. Their bodies had no natural defenses! Between ten and thirty million of our people died in the "Americas."

MAX

Why weren't we taught this?

IRVING

Our little massacre is just a forgotten footnote in history. Did they tell you anything about our people in your "American History" classes at Chapman High, home of the Savage Warriors?

MAX

Not much. We had a lot of real wars to cover: Revolutionary War, Civil War, Mexican-American War...

IRVING

(interrupting)

You never lost as many people in all your little wars put together!

Brandon is oblivious to Irving.

BRANDON

Course, you got your World Wars.

Irving nods like the conversation bores him.

IRVING

We lost our world to you!

BRANDON

Okay. This has been fun, but we're leaving. Come on, Max.

Brandon points back to his car.

MAX

Yeah, we better go. Sorry, Irving.

Irving looks away, sad. He turns, looks them in the eyes, and speaks slowly.

IRVING
I'll, I'll lose my...

Max and Brandon have a surprised took.

MAX
Job?

IRVING
Internship. It's an unpaid internship, but it's a start. The guys in the office are paid. White guys, of course. If we get bad comments on mandatory comment cards two days straight, we get fired.

Brandon gently guides Max down the trail.

MAX
We'll tell 'em you did a great job.

Irving races to hug them both.

IRVING
They're going to fire me anyway.

MAX
Why?

IRVING
Yesterday. Elderly couple visited.

BRANDON
Oh, my God. You didn't.

IRVING
Megaphone, right in the hearing aids.

Brandon and Max drop their heads.

IRVING (CONT'D)
Poor old lady was in such pain, her husband had to help her walk!

MAX
Geez.

IRVING
His cane kept getting in the way. Not my fault they fell.

BRANDON
No. Not your fault.

IRVING
None of us saw the prairie rattler.

Brandon and Max jump back and look around.

IRVING (CONT'D)
Didn't bite anyone, but the old man
'bout had a heart attack and
stroke.

MAX
What about the old woman?

IRVING
Unconscious after the fall, but she
came to in a few minutes. The water
helped, but the ambulance took
forever to get here!

BRANDON
Can imagine what their comment card
said.

Irving looks away.

IRVING
I can always return to begging in
the middle of the highway. I tried
begging along the farm roads 'round
here, but the tractors just don't
see you.

MAX
(mumbles)
Sorry, Irving, but we have to get
to Burlington, and on our way
across Colorado.

BRANDON
We thought this was going to be a
ten-minute stop.

Irving starts back down the trail, waving his arms.

IRVING
See a quick massacre, and go. I
surrender. I don't understand you
people! Let's go! I'll guide you
back.

Irving starts back down the trail.

Max and Brandon whisper into Max's GoPro.

MAX

Irving is really unstable right now. Maybe suicidal!

BRANDON

But helping him would ruin our schedule.

MAX

His life's a mess! We gotta help him!

Brandon and Max run to catch up to Irving.

BRANDON

Irving, wait up!

MAX

How 'bout a picnic lunch?

Irving stops, turns, and smiles.

IRVING

I know just the place. Follow me.

Irving hikes to a large open patch of prairie. He walks in concentric circles looking at the ground.

IRVING (CONT'D)

No snakes.

He sits Indian style and pats the ground.

MAX

What is this place?

IRVING

Sacred ground.

Brandon sits and digs through his backpack.

BRANDON

I've got a ham sandwich.

(laughs)

Inside joke.

Max sits.

MAX

The joke in our town is that when you turn eighteen, your folks give you a ham sandwich and a road map.

IRVING
(confused)
They want you to leave home?

Brandon looks away.

BRANDON
'Cept it's no joke at my house.

IRVING
Indigenous people want and need
family, especially youngsters.

MAX
Mine just want you to work and
bring home money. I didn't want to
pick and sort melons.

IRVING
Don't blame you there. Did either
of you go on a vision quest?

BRANDON
Vision quest?

IRVING
Like a walk-about, but while
fasting? For guidance? Direction?

BRANDON
I guess this trip across Colorado
is my vision quest.

Max turns away, then back.

MAX
Guess it is for me, too.

IRVING
You're not too late for the Sun
Dance, Brandon.

BRANDON
Sun Dance?

IRVING
Our brothers, the Crow, hold the
ceremony on the summer solstice. No
lesson in life comes without the
pain of understanding.

Brandon and Max pause to think.

MAX

Tell us about the Sun Dance.

Irving looks from side to side, then he whispers.

IRVING

Describing a boat or an airplane,
does not inform anyone about the
journey.

BRANDON

Please tell us.

Irving looks around again. Brandon focusses his GoPro on Irving.

IRVING

Imagine a meadow, three times this
size, surrounded by willows, with a
sweat lodge in it. Imagine fasting
for four days in a sweat lodge
praying for guidance, strength,
forgiveness, and compassion for
others. A fire outside heats the
boulders that will be rolled into
the sweat lodge to pour water on
for steam. The steam clings to you
like your past.

Irving motions the imaginary steam toward his face. He closes his eyes.

Brandon breaks his ham sandwich up into three pieces, and passes them to Irving and Max.

BRANDON

Ham sandwich?

MAX

I've got apples.

IRVING

Sure.

Irving grabs the sandwich and eats it like a starving man.

Max sees this and hands him an apple. He talks while chewing. Max and Brandon can't eat due to the story.

IRVING (CONT'D)

The Sun Dance involves great
sacrifice. Your chest is pierced in
four places.

(MORE)

IRVING (CONT'D)

Two strong sticks are inserted in the skin and tethered to leather straps to a forked cottonwood tree. Dancers have a hollowed eagle bone in their mouths as a whistle to fight the pain.

BRANDON

Geez.

IRVING

After days of dancing, the dancer leans way back and breaks free, ripping holes in his chest.

MAX

Right of passage for teens?

IRVING

Common misperception. It's for all-ages from young men to old. I danced for my father who had cancer for several years 'til the disease took him.

BRANDON

Geez!

IRVING

I danced for guidance many times.

MAX

Wait? You danced in the Sun Dance?

Irving slowly unbuttons his shirt. He opens it to reveal sixteen scars on his chest (in sets of four).

Brandon and Max gasp.

IRVING

That's not all.

Irving turns and lifts his shirt to reveal sixteen scars on his back.

MAX

Oh my, God!

Irving is quick to correct Max.

IRVING

Oh, Great Spirit. Always remember, No lesson in life comes without the pain of understanding.

Irving buttons his shirt, and sits down.

BRANDON

So, Irving, can I ask you a personal question?

IRVING

Sure?

BRANDON

All your time in sweat lodges asking for guidance, strength, forgiveness, and compassion for others; and all the pain of understanding you got from your dancing at the Sun Dance -- did it do you any good?

Irving looks down and begins to weep uncontrollably.

Max glares at Brandon.

MAX

Brandon! What kind of a question is that to ask?!

Max pulls Brandon aside. Max's GoPro captures it.

BRANDON

I was curious that's all. I mean, we're embarking on an epic journey ourselves. I want to know what works and what doesn't work. I mean, look at Irving. All the prayer and sacrifice in the world doesn't seem to have helped him. You said it yourself, he's a wreck!

Irving wails behind them.

MAX

(sarcastic)

Thanks a bunch, Brandon!

(whispers)

We'll never get to Burlington, now. Irving is more of a wreck than when we met him. We can't leave him now!

They go to comfort Irving who is crying his eyes out.

BRANDON

Sorry for upsetting you, dude.

MAX
We'll work this out together,
Irving.

BRANDON
We're here for you, dude.

MAX
Everything's going to be all right!

IRVING
I doubt it!

Irving is recovering from a good cry. He has his megaphone and his backpack by his side.

IRVING (CONT'D)
The bad guys are closing in!

Brandon and Max look around.

MAX
What bad guys, Irving? Do you see
bad guys?

Irving looks around suspiciously.

IRVING
They're all around me.
(beat)
And you!

Irving jumps up and grabs the megaphone. He races to an open low spot in the prairie, and yells into the megaphone.

IRVING (CONT'D)
Imagine being surrounded by
hundreds of cavalry with superior
weapons, and you got nowhere to
hide.

BRANDON
Awful!

IRVING
Their Henry rifles shoot 13 times
before reloading. Yours shoot once.

MAX
That's unfair.

IRVING
War isn't about being fair! It's
about being better murderers!
(MORE)

IRVING (CONT'D)

Their cannons hit you from more than a hundred yards away. You can't see 'em firing, but the sound hurts your ears, before a single cannon ball wipes out four or five lodges like bowling pins.

MAX

Irving, let's bring you down to headquarters.

IRVING

I grew up surrounded.

(beat)

Surrounded by people who didn't believe in me. Said I would amount to nothing!

Brandon finds this cheerful news.

BRANDON

Me, too! Voted "Least Likely to Succeed!" Though it as informally done on the web. Went viral!

Irving paces like a lawyer in a courtroom.

IRVING

Only, on a reservation, it's a death sentence. On the Pine Ridge Reservation, the life expectancy for men and women is almost 30 years less than outside the reservation! Explain that!

MAX

Poverty? Stress? Depression? Alcoholism. Poor health care?

IRVING

All of the above!

Max waves her arms.

MAX

Irving, this isn't doing anybody any good. You have to calm down!

Irving tosses down the megaphone, and smiles like a madman.

IRVING

I'm sorry. That was a selfish, self-serving rant. My bad!

BRANDON
You gonna be okay?

Brandon's smartphone rings with "Ding-Dong the Witch is Dead" ringtone.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
I gotta take this.

IRVING
Surprised you got reception out here.

Brandon turns away, but the others hear them both, because MOM LANGLEY (40) is yelling from the get-go.

MOM (O.S.)
Where da hell are you? It's trash day! I'm not wheeling your crap to the curb!

BRANDON
Miss you too, Ma!

MOM (O.S.)
You didn't really go on that stupid trip, did you?!

BRANDON
Left you a note.

Brandon turns to Max and Irving a bit embarrassed.

MOM (O.S.)
You picked up dat car. They called to check on insurance, and I said "Hell no!" They want dat car back!

BRANDON
Don't matter, Ma? Possession is like three-eighths of the law.

Brandon is pleased with himself.

Max chuckles.

MOM (O.S.)
Brandon Langley, who you with?!

Maxine shakes her head and waves her arms 'no.'

BRANDON
Maxine Ramirez.

MOM (O.S.)

An abduction! That's what it is!
And she ain't eighteen or white!
You in a heap of trouble! I'm
calling dat Ramirez home now! Den,
I'm callin' da police!

Click!

Brandon smiles nervously.

BRANDON

That went good, I think.

Max stomps over to Brandon.

MAX

She ain't eighteen or white?

Brandon looks away.

IRVING

Ah. Been together a couple of
hours, and the two lovebirds having
their first race riot!

Brandon turns toward Irving in anger.

BRANDON

Irving, I'm not a bigot. My Ma,
she's from the dinosaur age!

MAX

My Papá's gonna be furious.

Brandon turns to Max.

BRANDON

You didn't tell your parents?

MAX

Well...

BRANDON

Not even a note?

(beat)

That's very irresponsible.

Max paces, as Irving enjoys the show.

MAX

I go two or three days sometime
without seeing my Papá, and my mom
thinks I'm just in the way.

BRANDON
Not even a note!

MAX
Okay. That was wrong. I needed to
get away. That's all!

BRANDON
They might think I abducted you!

IRVING
That's eight to ten years in the
State Pen.

Max turns on Irving, while she paces in circles.

Irving, upset, paces back and forth; and Brandon starts
pacing, careful not to run into anybody.

MAX
That's not helping, Irving!

IRVING
Should have left a note, Max!

MAX
And what about the car, Brandon?!

BRANDON
I can't go to prison! I'm afraid to
shower when I'm alone!

Max speaks quietly, scared.

MAX
My father has rifles and pistols.

Irving flails his arms like a madman again.

IRVING
Rifles and pistols didn't do us any
good. They signed our death
warrants, that's what they did.

Irving, Max, and Brandon collide in the middle of the open
prairie.

Each has a gloomy expression.

MAX AND BRANDON
We're screwed.

Max pushes Brandon lightly.

MAX

What are we going to do now, Mister
"Least Likely to Succeed?"

BRANDON

I don't know! What are we going to
do now Ms. "Least Popular Girl in
the School?"

Max points her finger at Brandon, shakes it, then begins to
stomp down the trail in the direction of the car.

She speaks without turning around.

MAX

I was the least popular girl in the
class, not the least popular girl
in the entire school! Take me home!

Silence.

Brandon makes a private recording into his GoPro.

BRANDON

She's as crazy as Irving is. I'm
taking her home to Chapman, and
dumping her off!

Brandon trudges after her. Irving yells.

IRVING

I hope you both enjoyed your visit!
Remember to fill out a comment
card!

End Act One

ACT TWO

INT. CAR - DAY

On the road from Sand Creek, Max is depressed as she looks away. Brandon drives slowly on an asphalt road.

BRANDON

So, this is the road we missed getting here.

MAX

I'm an introvert. I hid in my room from the time I was born, until this morning.

Brandon equally sad, looks over at Max, and he tries to help.

BRANDON

But, you answered my Craigslist ad, and we got pretty far.

(beat)

Irving's a raving lunatic, huh?!

MAX

He's not alone. Not all of us rave.

BRANDON

Lunatics? You're not a lunatic.

Max looks up and into Brandon's eyes. He sees her tears.

MAX

We're all lunatics. Some show it more than others. Take me home!

Brandon drives on. He stops at the main road.

BRANDON

Innerstate 70 is to the left. Home is to the right.

MAX

Did I ever go to a single football game, field trip to the Denver Zoo, or Natural History Museum? I was always sick those days. No homecoming basketball games or dances. No after-school activities. I always had a pretend cold or flu.

Brandon chuckles nervously.

BRANDON

Some people prefer the company of their strange selves over the company of strangers.

MAX

At least you had the courage to show up. You knew you would be picked on.

Brandon shrugs and snickers, blowing it off.

BRANDON

A little.

MAX

And bullied. I remember Johnny Cramer beat the shit out of you in the lunchroom, because you didn't sit more than two tables away.

Brandon shrugs and snickers, and laughs a little.

BRANDON

He was pretty strict about the two-table rule. Wonder how his family ate dinner at night?

Max looks him in the eyes.

MAX

I thought you were either the bravest or the dumbest guy alive.

Brandon looks away.

BRANDON

Bought a car that overheats, no insurance, abducted a beautiful non-white seventeen-year-old girl, all to go on a wild, epic adventure across Colorado. Dumbest guy alive sounds right. And, now I gotta drive us back home in shame.

MAX

(mumbles)
Beautiful? No!
(defiant)
But, home? Not yet!

Max rants.

MAX (CONT'D)

Irving's not the only one who can rant! He right about the way we treated his people. But even this horrible massacre couldn't destroy his pride, his history, or love for his people.

Brandon looks at Max bewildered.

BRANDON

Where are you going with this?

MAX

We're not going back! We're going to finish this epic adventure if it kills you!

BRANDON

What?

MAX

Or if you end up serving eight to ten years in a cell with a guy named Bubba!

BRANDON

Huh?

MAX

Or if our parents never speak to us again! This is our defining moment!

The car stalls.

INT. CAR - SUNSET

Brandon and Max drive in silence. The GoPro is off.

BRANDON

You sure you want to go through with this?

Max looks away, then back at Brandon.

MAX

I said I was all in!

Brandon smiles.

BRANDON

Imagine the adventure that awaits!

MAX

So far, we made it exactly fifty-two miles from home.

BRANDON

Day isn't done. How far to Burlington?

MAX

Eighty-six miles. An hour and forty minutes, if we don't have to stop and cool down.

BRANDON

Burlington -- the far eastern edge of Colorado. The end of the world!

Max smiles, as Brandon turns serious.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Why did you want to come on the trip?

Max is serious.

MAX

I was worried about getting agoraphobia.

BRANDON

Fear of agriculture?

MAX

Getting out in public; social situations. I stayed in a lot.

BRANDON

Is that what causes agoraphobia?

MAX

Panic attacks, they think.

BRANDON

You get 'em.

MAX

Almost had one when Irving had his meltdown. Got one the day my acceptance letters came in. Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and Berkeley.

BRANDON

You serious? I didn't get any!

MAX

I'm thinking Harvard, but I'd never left town, so needed to prove to myself that I could get out in the world. I was looking at cheap bus trips to Denver, when I saw your Craigslist ad.

BRANDON

What do I do if you get a panic attack?

MAX

Calm me down. Talk softly. Explain how everything is going to be all right.

BRANDON

Guess I'm honored, but it's not what I imagined. In Route 66, it was Tod and Buz, two confident and capable guys.

MAX

I know, in the '61 Corvette, you told me.

BRANDON

I needed to find a best bud, someone I could talk to at the community college. You're going away. You're not Tod or Buz!

MAX

Sorry.

Brandon looks away.

BRANDON

We could pretend.

MAX

Huh?

BRANDON

On our epic adventure along Innerstate 70, I could be Tod, and you could be Buz!

MAX

Buz?

BRANDON

If you wouldn't mind?

MAX

If it makes you feel better, Tod!

Brandon smiles.

BRANDON

Now we're talking, Buz!

Max smiles.

They see a road sign "Burlington -- Junction I-70, 5 Miles."

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Less than five miles, and we'll be
on good ol' Innerstate-70!

MAX

Better stop for gas in Burlington!
Remember, your fuel gauge is stuck
on full.

Brandon pauses. He smiles.

BRANDON

Glad you remembered. I thought we
were getting great mileage!

Max smiles.

MAX

One more thing, Tod.

BRANDON

What? You name it!

MAX

I'd like to be the leader of this
expedition.

Brandon is defiant.

BRANDON

No. It's my '61 Corvette!

MAX

Women never get the chance to lead!
I want to lead!

BRANDON

No.

MAX

Look! It's brawn versus brains. You
obviously have the brawn!

Brandon looks down at his bony arms and scrawny body.

BRANDON
That's true. Been working out.

MAX
It shows! And I have the brains!

BRANDON
Okay, that's true, too.

MAX
It's settled then! Burlington, dead
ahead!

As they approach the junction of I-70, it's getting dark.

BRANDON
Just about there!

MAX
Epic adventure.

They laugh!

BRANDON
Makes our home town of Chapman look
like New York City! Who knew?

MAX
Not me.

Brandon puts his blinker on to exit the freeway.

MAX (CONT'D)
What was it that the used-car
salesman said about putting in the
dashboard lights you ordered?

BRANDON
You ready for this?

MAX
Ready for what?

BRANDON
You know on TV and in movies, you
can always see the faces of people
in cars?

MAX
Yeah.

BRANDON

So, in real life, cars don't have lights like that!

MAX

Duh! It's dark on the inside of cars, so you can see out.

BRANDON

Duh! But I was thinking, how cool would it be to be able to see our faces while driving at night, just like on TV or in the movies.

MAX

So, you had them install more interior lights? Seems excessive.

Max squirms, a bit uneasy.

BRANDON

Better for filming with our GoPro camera's too. Get the GoPro to prove we made it to Burlington.

Max complies, as Brandon exits the freeway slowly.

MAX

To document our epic adventure?

BRANDON

Exactly! You ready?

Brandon feels for the switch on the lower-left side of the dashboard.

MAX

I guess so, but I don't think...

Brandon flicks on the lights. They are too bright, and they blind Brandon and Max.

MAX (CONT'D)

Turn 'em off!

Brandon swerves to the left, and veers off the freeway exit. Brandon over-corrects and swerves to the right, on the other edge of the freeway exit.

The edge of the road is bumpy. He yells.

BRANDON

Can't find the switch!

MAX

Stop! For Heaven's sake, stop!

Brandon slams on the brakes, and the car swerves and skids off the road, toward a barbed-wire fence, and into a ditch on the side of the road, before hitting a fence post.

They SCREAM! CRASH! The car hits a fencepost. A headlight SHATTERS. STEAM rises from the hood again.

BRANDON

You okay?

MAX

Can't go to Stanford if I die! You?

BRANDON

Think the new interior lights are a little too bright.

MAX

(upset)

Ya think?

They SEE a flashlight carried by a large, shadowy figure walking toward them.

As the farmer, T. EDWARD DOWD (65), in overalls, gets closer to them, they SEE he's carrying a shotgun.

T. Edward shines his flashlight on Brandon, then Max.

T. EDWARD

Name's T. Edward Dowd the third.
Folks call me T. Edward. You done broke my fence! You in a heap a trouble!

BRANDON

Terribly sorry...

T. EDWARD

Save it! Come along peaceful-like, or I'm gonna have to shoot ya!

MAX

T. Edward, if we could just...

T. Edward cocks the shotgun, and aims it Max's head.

T. EDWARD

You Mexican?

MAX
American.

T. EDWARD
Don't think so.

T. Edward points the shotgun at Brandon.

BRANDON
All a misunderstanding...

T. EDWARD
Transporting a minor illegal
immigrant is a felony. That's human
trafficking! I'll be calling the
U.S. Immigration and Customs
Enforcement soon as we's back at
the ranch.

Brandon glares at Max.

T. EDWARD (CONT'D)
Come on, now. Git your gear. Let's
go! Don't make me shoot ya!

BRANDON
(mumbles)
I'm just following my leader. I'm
just an abductor and human
trafficker!

Brandon and Max get their things and lead the way down the
down the road, with T. Edward holding a shotgun on them.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Max paces, while Brandon checks his phone.

BRANDON
You better call home.

MAX
And tell my folks, what?

BRANDON
Tell 'em the truth. Don't worry.
Everything's fine. Just stepped
out, voluntarily, for the epic
journey of a lifetime, driving
across Colorado with a well-
respected, handsome-but-
gentlemanly, graduating senior!

MAX

What about the shotgun, and
sleeping in a barn?

BRANDON

No need to go into details.
Besides, T. Edward said he'd pull
the '61 Corvette out of the ditch
in the morning if we fixed his
fence.

MAX

Think he'll call the cops or ICE?

BRANDON

Hell, no! The great Colorado farm
economy is built on cheap Mexican
labor. Bet he has other work for
us. Maybe we can make enough to buy
a gas gauge and a water pump!

Max shakes her head in disbelief, as Brandon strips to get
into his sleeping bag.

MAX

I guess he knows we won't try to
escape, without the car.

Brandon watches as Max strips from inside her sleeping bag.

BRANDON

Up at dawn, fence fixed and on the
road by ten with our pockets full
of dough!

Max rolls her eyes in disgust.

INT. BARN - DAWN

T. Edward storms into the barn as the rooster crows. Max and
Brandon are asleep on opposite sides of the barn.

T. EDWARD

Up and at 'em. Fence ain't gonna
fix itself.

EXT. PASTURE - DAY

Brandon and Max are digging fence-post holes, and stringing
barbed wire in the hot sun. Max wears jeans and a halter top.
They both wear protective gloves. Brandon takes his shirt
off. Max eyes his body.

MAX

Where'd you learn to do this?

BRANDON

My uncle's ranch, south of town.

MAX

How long we gotta do this?

BRANDON

I forgot! This is your first real job! Who knows? T. Edward said he'll be back for us after he pulls the '61 Corvette out. Said we didn't even dent that fence post!

MAX

Then what are we doing here?

BRANDON

He needed us to mend the fence. We're helping him out. Maybe he'll pay us a little something. We need the money!

MAX

We both still have a hundred bucks, don't we?

BRANDON

Well. I used mine for the new interior lights.

Max's eyes open widely, as T. Edward drives up in an old pickup. Max whispers.

MAX

I don't have a hundred bucks. More like twenty.

T. EDWARD

Makin' fine progress. Supper's ready at sunset.

Brandon and Max looked shocked.

BRANDON

We best be going. Got a long drive ahead of us. Grand Junction.

T. EDWARD

Grand Junction! That's clear across the state!

MAX

We'll finish up this post before we go.

T. EDWARD

You ain't goin' nowhere!

BRANDON

I'm calling the cops!

Brandon takes out his phone, but doesn't call.

T. EDWARD

Go ahead.

MAX

I'll call.

Max takes out her phone, but she doesn't call.

T. EDWARD

Though so. Keep working the east boundary. I'll fetch y'all for supper.

T. Edward drives off.

BRANDON

You a legal citizen?

MAX

Maybe.

BRANDON

Social Security Card?

MAX

Told ya. Never had a job!

BRANDON

How did you apply for college?

MAX

Just left that part blank. I aced the ACTs. What are they gonna say?

BRANDON

Keep digging! That's what they're gonna say!

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The farmhouse looks like a museum. Cobwebs are everywhere. There are dusty family photos scattered about, and no sign of a woman's touch. Brandon and Max sit at a table set for four, as T. Edward brings in a huge bowl of chili.

T. EDWARD
 You can leave in the mornin'.
 Thanks for all-y'all's help.

Brandon and Max dig in on the chili. T. Edward slams a fist down on the table.

T. EDWARD (CONT'D)
 We'll pray first!

Brandon and Max bow, their mouths full of hot chili.

T. EDWARD (CONT'D)
 Lord, we thank thee for the
 bountiful food we are about to eat.

Brandon and Max glance at each other briefly.

T. EDWARD (CONT'D)
 We're so sorry the dearly departed
 can't join us, but they's dead.

BRANDON
 Amen.

T. Edward keeps praying.

T. EDWARD
 Buried out back.

MAX
 Amen.

T. EDWARD
 With the others.

Brandon and Max open their eyes widely.

T. EDWARD (CONT'D)
 Amen.

MAX AND BRANDON
 Amen.

They all eat the terrible chili.

T. EDWARD
It's all a lie, ya know.

BRANDON
What is, T. Edward?

T. EDWARD
World ain't round. It's flat like
it says in the Good Book.

MAX
So, the moon landing, solar and
lunar eclipses, and the sailing and
flying around the world is all
fake?

T. Edward stands and screams.

T. EDWARD
If the Good Book says it's flat,
it's flat! Help up by four angels,
one in each corner!

Max snickers.

MAX
If you say so, T. Edward.

T. EDWARD
You can take a carpenter's level
everywhere in the world, and it
reads level! What's that tell ya?

Brandon snickers.

BRANDON
Pretty strong angels.

Max stands to distract T. Edward.

MAX
Would you mind getting us a bit
more water, T. Edward? This chili
tastes extra good with cold water.

T. Edward grunts, but exits to fetch more water.

Max grabs Brandon's arm and whispers.

MAX (CONT'D)
We're outta here!

BRANDON
He owes us each a day's pay.

MAX

It's canned chili. He doesn't have any money, he's armed, and he's nuts!

Brandon pauses. She grabs his shirt. They race out.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

They hop in the convertible. Brandon starts it up, as T. Edward races out with a shotgun.

T. EDWARD

Won't get far at night. You're headlight's busted.

BRANDON

Thanks for dinner. We'll take our chances.

MAX

By, T. Edward! Thanks for the work experience!

T. Edward fires the shotgun into the air. The car stalls. Brandon and Max panic as T. Edward approaches the car, holding out two twenty-dollar bills.

T. EDWARD

Twenty bucks a day is what we pay wet-backs and drifters.

Brandon gets the car to start, as Max grabs the money.

MAX

Thanks, T. Edward. See ya next time through!

They drive off, waving. T. Edward doesn't wave.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Max holds the money in triumph as they drive.

MAX

Forty bucks? Two bucks an hour each? Barely gas money.

BRANDON

Not enough for a water pump. And, with a broken headlight, we gotta drive during the day, like Louis and Clark.

Brandon smiles.

MAX

Always optimistic?

BRANDON

I'm a gas tank's half-full kinda guy.

MAX

That's why only optimists run out a gas! There's a 24-hour gas station up ahead. We'll need thirty bucks of gas to get to Denver. We'll sleep in the car, and drive at dawn.

Brandon laughs happily.

BRANDON

Just like Tod and Buz. Work a little, drive a little. I love it!

Max looks over and smiles, as she studies his face. It's sincere.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - DAY

Brandon drives, and Max enjoys the summer scenery along the highway. We HEAR the theme song to Route 66 in the b.g. Brandon points to the right.

BRANDON

At's where the deer and antelope play. Amber waves of grain.

MAX

Purple mountains' majesty dead ahead?

BRANDON

You're not panicking?

Max looks around and smiles.

MAX
America, the beautiful. What's not
to like?

Brandon puts on the right turn signal.

BRANDON
Rest stops! I gotta pee.

EXT. REST STOP - DAY

Brandon pulls into the rest stop. Max sees a middle-aged African American, NORM SANDERS (40), in a gray business suit, sitting and smiling, with a small cardboard sign that reads: "Denver."

BRANDON
You go first. I'll watch our stuff.

MAX
Think it's necessary?

Brandon eyes the black man. They exchange smiles.

BRANDON
Guess not.

LATER

When Brandon and Max return from the bathrooms to see Norm standing by their car.

NORM
'84 Chrysler LaBaron. Nice. Plenty
of room in the back seat to Denver?

BRANDON
I don't know...

MAX
Why not? Hop in.

Norm smiles, and hops in.

NORM
Thanks. Name's Norm Sanders.
Anywhere closer to Denver is fine.
It's ethnically lonely out here.

BRANDON
I'm Brandon. This is Max. We're on
our way to Commerce City to get a
water pump.

NORM
And a headlight?

MAX
And a gas gauge if they got one.

They laugh as they drive off.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - DAY

Once on the freeway, Max starts the GoPro.

NORM
What's that?

MAX
Mini-video-camera called a GoPro.

BRANDON
We're documenting our epic
adventure across Colorado.

NORM
(nicely)
Turn it off.

BRANDON
It's kinda important...

Norm pulls out a snub-nosed 38 pistol and aims it at Brandon.

NORM
How important is it to you?

Brandon swerves the car nervously, and Max shakes angrily.

MAX
The video proves we're happy with
who we are! It's important to us!

Norm pulls back the pistol.

BRANDON
Put that away! She gets panic
attacks. Such a stereotype, anyway!
Black guy with a gun!

NORM
You call it a stereotype. I call it
profiling!

MAX
Profiling? You're holding a gun!

NORM

Just to fulfill the stereotype!
(beat)
Look, blacks get pulled over by
cops much more than white guys get
pulled over! It's a fact!

BRANDON

Nothing to worry about if you did
nothing wrong.

NORM

Then, blacks get put away longer
for lesser crimes than whites.

MAX

So, you carry a gun?

NORM

And if you pick up an ex-con, half
of them are black! Why's that? We
don't make up half the population
on the outside! But, it isn't a
stereotype! It's profiling!

BRANDON

(to Max)

He makes a good point there.

Norm puts the pistol away.

NORM

Sorry. Don't know what to do with
myself.

MAX

Huh?

NORM

Lot of decisions to make. Should I
kill ya, take your money, steal
your car...

BRANDON

Too many things wrong with car.

MAX

And us! I was informally voted
least popular girl, and Brandon was
voted least likely to succeed in
our graduating class.

NORM

I was voted most likely to take a
life and marry outside my species.

(beat)

I'm not going to shoot ya. You gave
me a ride, and I don't have any
bullets.

BRANDON

Very comforting.

MAX

We have to stop every hour, and let
the '61 Corvette cool down.

NORM

Huh.

BRANDON

It's what I call it. After Route
66.

NORM

This is Interstate 70.

BRANDON

Innerstate 70.

NORM

Trust me. The penitentiary is in
Kansas on Interstate 70. Goes from
Maryland to Utah.

Brandon is frightened and confused.

BRANDON

Thought it was Innerstate 70. Just
in Colorado.

MAX

Should have told you, Brandon.

Brandon is furious at Max.

BRANDON

You knew? You knew and you didn't
tell me?

MAX

Thought you were kidding.

NORM

Big fucking deal! The road is
longer than you thought!

BRANDON
Changes everything! Not an epic
adventure. It's nothing!

Brandon pouts. Max glances back at Norm, and they shrug their
shoulders. Max leans over to yell at Brandon.

MAX
Norm's got a gun, and you're mad at
me for not telling you it was
Interstate 70 all along!

Brandon pouts and looks away, then back at Max.

BRANDON
Should've told me, that's all.

Max ignores Brandon.

MAX
Norm, what kind of work did you do
before you were arrested?

NORM
Taught third grade. Needed the pot
to relax on the weekends. Those
kids will drive ya nuts!

Brandon is still upset with Max.

BRANDON
Should have told me, Max!

Norm leans up to Brandon.

NORM
Want me to shoot her?

Brandon smiles. Max snickers. Norm laughs hysterically.

EXT. REST STOP - DAY

The hood is up. The car is steaming. Norm, Brandon, and Max
stare at the water pump.

NORM
Rebuilt water pump, couple clamps,
maybe a hose. Easy.

BRANDON
Not for us.

MAX

What were you in for, Norm?

NORM

Told ya! Smoking pot. Served half of the fifteen years. They said I was selling it. That was a lie. Judge gave me the max. No offense.

MAX

None taken.

BRANDON

It's legal here in Colorado.

NORM

Ain't timing a bitch! It's why I moved from Kansas.

MAX

Won't need the pistol.

NORM

Guess you're right.

Norm goes to the back seat, wipes the pistol clean, rolls the pistol in a newspaper, and dumps it in a garbage can. Max and Brandon smile.

MAX

Thanks. Norm.

NORM

Firing pin was filed down. Wouldn't have fired.

BRANDON

Why'd you carry it?

NORM

Bad neighborhood. White-collar criminals all around. Needed it!

MAX

Prison? For smoking pot! That's dumb!

Norm looks away.

NORM

Knew that the day I was arrested, Seven and a half years of calling myself a dumb-shit.

(MORE)

NORM (CONT'D)

First day out, my friend who picked me up hands me a pistol that doesn't fire, and has no bullets.

BRANDON

Some friend.

NORM

I know, right? Don't need fiends like that! I left town.

MAX

What's next for you?

NORM

Don't know. Wasn't supposed to leave the state without a job offer.

Brandon closes the hood.

BRANDON

Should make it to Commerce City.

MAX

Junk yard there has our water pump.

NORM

Probably have a headlight, too.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - DAY

Brandon drives. Everyone chats.

NORM

Commerce City close to Denver?

MAX

Nine miles to Downtown.

BRANDON

We'll take you.

Norm puts his head down.

NORM

My daughter's there. She's a cop.

Max shakes her head, disgusted.

MAX

So, you were bringing her a gun?

NORM
She don't know I'm coming.

Norm smiles and slaps Brandon and Max on the back.

NORM (CONT'D)
But, who don't like their dad
visiting, right?

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Brandon drives to the junkyard office, and Norm hops out immediately to lift the hood.

They are met by woman, ESTER (40) in blue overalls, with bandages covering her right hand.

ESTER
Sorry, can't help ya. Broke a hand
when my ex-husband's jaw hit it.
We're closed!

MAX
But, I called, and you said you had
our water pump!

ESTER
I do, but I can't take it off or
put it on. See the sign?

Ester points to a "Help Wanted" sign.

NORM
I could use a job.

ESTER
Certified mechanic?

NORM
No.

ESTER
Two-years' experience.

NORM
No.

ESTER
Willingness to learn?

NORM
Yes.

ESTER
You're hired.

NORM
My name's Norm Sanders.

ESTER
Overall's in the office, Norm.
Hurry up. I got three days of back
orders.

Norm takes two steps and turns around.

NORM
I'd like to do the kids' water
pump, and headlight for free.

Ester winks at Norm.

ESTER
I'll take it out of your first
paycheck.

Ester waits for Norm to get into the office.

ESTER (CONT'D)
Ex-con?

MAX
And third-grade teacher. Busted for
smoking pot in Kansas.

ESTER
That's unfair!

MAX
It was profiling, pure and simple.
Norm's a nice guy inside and out.

BRANDON
Plus, he didn't shoot us, rob us,
or steal our car.

ESTER
Good to know. I need the help.

MAX
We could help Norm and you out
today for a few extra bucks.

BRANDON
We could use the gas money, and Max
here needs work experience.

(MORE)

BRANDON (CONT'D)
I used to take apart and rebuild my
uncle's ATVs.

Ester pulls out a long list of car parts.

ESTER
Five bucks a part, removed with
mounting hardware, and polished up
cleaner than the Queen's ass on a
holiday.

Max grabs the list.

MAX
Yes, Ma'am!

Max and Brandon race around looking for parts, as Ester
yells.

ESTER
Don't call me Ma'am. Ma'am means
bitch if you're not in the south.

Norm races out of the office with a tool kit, and wearing
blue overalls, and begins work on the Brandon's car.

LATER

At DUSK, Norm and Ester bend over the open hood of the car,
as Brandon and Max approach carrying two boxes of CAR PARTS.
The teens are covered with grease.

MAX
Removed, shined, and labeled like
you said.

BRANDON
The bumper and passenger-side door
from the '96 Nissan Sentra you
needed are against the side of the
office.

ESTER
Your '61 Corvette's ready to roll.
Norm here knows his way around an
engine.

NORM
Headlight works too, but it's a
little dim.

MAX

Dim is not knowing a socket wrench
from a crescent wrench. Learned
that today, thanks to Brandon!

Max and Brandon laugh as they set down their boxes of car
parts, and hug Ester and Norm.

ESTER

Folks come here and see junk. I see
these vehicles as organ donors,
keeping the dreams of others alive.

NORM

I'm staying on a while. I'll call
my daughter tonight and tell her
I'm okay, not to worry.

Ester pulls out a wad of cash, and pays the teens.

ESTER

You kids can sleep here tonight.
Safe as anyplace in Denver.

Max hops in the passenger seat.

MAX

We're getting fond of showering at
truck stops, sleeping in the car,
and sneaking into hotels for the
free breakfasts.

Brandon gets in to drive.

NORM

I adjusted your new interior
lights.

Brandon turns them on. They're perfectly adjusted to add just
a little light on faces.

MAX

Woo-hoo! I'm firing up the GoPro.

Max takes video of the junkyard.

BRANDON

I'm showing her all the best sites
in Colorado.

Brandon drives off slowly.

MAX

Plus, we can save the money for gas. Long way to go!

NORM

Oh! Your gas gauge is still busted, so keep filling her up.

Norm and Ester wave goodbye.

ESTER

Careful of the morning traffic!

BRANDON

It's Max's turn to drive tomorrow!

Max turns to Brandon and her eyes open widely.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - DAY

Max drives in rush-hour traffic. She is shaking, driving poorly, and panicking, as Brandon takes video in the passenger seat.

BRANDON

You do have a driver's license, don't you?

MAX

Wish I did.

Max struggles to stay in the center of the lane.

BRANDON

Hold her steady.

MAX

Can't. Lousy peripheral vision.

BRANDON

What?

MAX

Can't see the sides well. How am I doing on your side?

BRANDON

Ha! Somebody kept coming to the Burger Giant before closing and getting...

MAX

Chocolate milkshakes.

BRANDON

That was you who kept hitting our back-view mirrors on the side of the drive-thru?

MAX

Staying in lanes is tough!

BRANDON

Jesus! Better pull over and let me drive.

MAX

Can't change lanes.

The car swerves left and right.

BRANDON

Put on your blinker.

MAX

Blinkers are a sign of weakness. I can do this.

Traffic is horrible. Max stresses out.

MAX (CONT'D)

No traffic like this back home!

BRANDON

This is bad.

MAX

My hands and feet are shaking.

Brandon panics.

BRANDON

Oh, shit! A panic attack. What do we do? We can't just stop in the middle of the highway!

MAX

I don't know. I hate this?

BRANDON

Right blinker! Right blinker!

Max turns on the new interior lights.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

No! Right blinker! Right blinker, damn it!

The car stalls. Cars and trucks honk at them.

Max tries to start the car, but fails.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Let me do it!

Max yells at Brandon very loudly.

MAX
I can do this!

Max finally starts the car, and takes off confidently, waving to drivers triumphantly.

Brandon captures it all on the GoPro.

BRANDON
Knew you could do it!

MAX
(sarcastic)
Sure, you did!

She drives on.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - DAY

Max stops at the Lookout Mountain exit, so Brandon can switch to driver. They SEE the bison that always hang around the fence. They document it all on the GoPros.

MAX
Oh my, God! Bison.

BRANDON
Believe they're called buffalo.
Irving said we killed 'em all.
Guess he was wrong.

MAX
Scientific name is Bison bison.

BRANDON
That's redundant redundant.

MAX
Only about 30,000 pure bison left.

BRANDON
That's a lot.

MAX

Used to be forty to sixty million!
Hundred years ago, there were less
than a hundred still alive.

BRANDON

Geez. Irving was mostly right then.

MAX

Last wolf in Colorado was shot in
1940. Last grizzly bear in 1979.

BRANDON

You mean, when our parents were
alive there were still grizzly
bears in Colorado?

Max is sad.

MAX

Like Irving, I feel cheated that we
don't get to see wolves and grizzly
bears roam free.

Brandon puts an arm around Max.

BRANDON

Maybe they'll come back.
(beat)
The bison did.

MAX

Took people who cared to bring 'em
back.

BRANDON

I care.

They share a moment, before Max hands Brandon the keys.

They drive off.

With Brando's GoPro capturing it all, Brandon drives past
Loveland Ski Area, through the Eisenhower Tunnel marveling at
the beautiful scenery. They laugh and giggle.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Who knew there were mountains like
this in Colorado?

MAX

Everybody?

BRANDON

I had a pen pal in Japan when I was in middle school...

MAX

Hey, so did I. Same class, I bet.

BRANDON

Anyway, my pen pal, Tom Tse, spelled T-S-E, his real first name wasn't Tom, they just said that to sound 'Merican.

Max is annoyed.

MAX

Did you just say, 'Merican, without the A?

BRANDON

Anyway, Tom Tse wrote and asked me how the skiing was, and if I saw elk and moose every day? I wrote back that I never skied or saw wild animals, and he asked to be assigned another pen pal.

MAX

Kinda sad.

BRANDON

Less writing for me. I was okay with it.

Brandon looks around at the scenery.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Ever have a boyfriend?

Max looks away.

MAX

Nothing serious. Billy Trujillo used to share his Twinkies with me in seventh grade. I smiled. He saw the big gap in my front teeth, and never shared Twinkies again. I think he thought the suger caused my tooth to fall out, 'cause he quit eating them, too.

BRANDON

Geez.

MAX

You ever have a serious girlfriend?

BRANDON

Lots. They just never knew it!

They chuckle, then look away.

MAX

I love the mountains!

BRANDON

Best epic adventure in my life!

MAX

Only epic adventure in our lives.

Brandon drives up Vail Pass, and stops at the Vail Pass rest stop.

EXT. VAIL PASS REST STOP - CONTINUOUS

They separate by 10 yards, and go wild with their GoPros. Brandon speaks privately.

BRANDON

We're over 10,600-feet in the air. Well, on the ground, but you know what I mean. It's only two and a half hours to Grand Junction on the far side of Colorado, and it's all downhill from here! Can't believe we made it this far! Totally epic. The '61 Corvette is amazing!

(whispers)

I think I'm in love. No way Max goes off to college now! She'll stay with me at Chapman Community College!

Meanwhile, Max has her own private conversation.

MAX

Should have told my parents, but we'll be home tomorrow night. Except, everything has changed. I could go out of the house. I could go beyond the high school. I don't need to sneak out late to the Burger Giant for a milkshake. I'm braver than I ever imagined! I drove in Denver traffic!

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)
 I drove into the Rocky Mountains.
 I'm not afraid. Yale, here I come!

Max and Brandon saunter back to the car with smiles on their faces.

MAX (CONT'D)
 Brandon, watch my stuff, while I
 use the rest room, will ya?

BRANDON
 Least I can do.

Max looks bewildered as she steps lively to the rest room.

Brandon gazes at her until she disappears. Max's phone rings on the seat of the car.

Brandon looks around before he answers it, because he sees the photo of Max's dad, PAPÁ (45), a Mexican field laborer, who speaks with a very heavy accent.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Hello?

PAPÁ (O.S.)
 Are you the worthless boy who
 abducted my daughter?

BRANDON
 I... I... Hold on, I think you may
 have the wrong number.

PAPÁ (O.S.)
 I know the number!

Brandon turns to see Max walking toward him. Max sees her phone in Brandon's hands. She runs over to him.

Brandon quickly hands the phone to Max, but Brandon's GoPro remains on.

MAX
 Papá? Is that you?

PAPÁ (O.S.)
 Come home this instant!

Max is happy and excited. She puts the phone on speaker.

MAX
 Papá, we have only two and half
 hours to drive before we make it to
 Grand Junction!

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

All the way across Colorado!
Imagine that! From your little girl
who never left her room to a world
traveler. And, guess what? I'm
driving in the Rocky Mountains!

PAPÁ (O.S.)

Immigration and Customs Enforcement
officials called our house. Your
idiot sidekick's mom called them.

Brandon's head drops in sadness. Max is speechless.

BRANDON

I'm not a sidekick.

PAPÁ (O.S.)

Max? Did you hear me?

MAX

What's gonna happen?

PAPÁ (O.S.)

My five-year work visa expired long
ago. You were a niña. You need to
explain to them. Ellos no me
entienden.

Papá weeps. He can't speak. Max's voice tails off.

MAX

They don't understand you.

Max's phone loses reception.

Max curses in Spanish, as Brandon looks away.

MAX (CONT'D)

Damn it! Shit! Your phone get
reception?

Brandon struggles to find and check his phone. He shakes his
head, 'no.'

MAX (CONT'D)

This is all your fault!

BRANDON

My fault. You answered my
Craigslist ad!

MAX

Your mother turned my folks in!
They'll be deported, asshole!

Brandon looks away.

BRANDON
I didn't know!

Max shuts off the engine, throws the keys at Brandon, and grabs her backpack and sleeping bag.

MAX
You and your epic journey! Route
66! Innerstate 70!

BRANDON
It got you out of your room, and
out of Chapman!

Max trudges down toward the freeway entrance.

MAX
And my parents out of the country!
You happy?

Brandon is defiant.

BRANDON
We came all this way in the '61
Corvette! I'm two-and-a-half hours
from fulfilling my dream!

Max yells without turning around.

MAX
And ending my parents' dream.

Brandon looks away, but yells to Max.

BRANDON
It's four and a half hours to
Chapman from here. We can race to
Grand Junction, complete the epic
adventure, and be back in Chapman
in nine hours. What do ya say?

Max flips him off.

Brandon hops in the car. It doesn't start.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Piece of shit car! It's nothing
like a new '61 Corvette.
(beat)
It never was!

The car finally starts. He turns on his GoPro and drives right past Max on the way west toward Grand Junction.

She lowers her head, shivering cold, and sticks out her thumb to hitchhike east toward Denver.

Super: "Twenty minutes later."

Brandon races onto the Rest Area exit traveling east. He sees Max hitchhiking and slams on the brakes to pick her up.

MAX

What are you doing here?

BRANDON

Sorry for being a dick.

MAX

I gotta get home.

BRANDON

I know. Would have been here sooner, but there's nowhere to turn around, 'til ya get to the Vail. I'll have you home by eight P.M.

MAX

Thanks!

Neither can hide the disappointment in their faces.

BEGIN MONTAGE -- From Vail Pass to Chapman, CO (Lamar, CO)

They don't film their return trip. They hardly speak.

-- We SEE highway signs that read, "Denver"

-- They pass through the Eisenhower Tunnel.

-- They SEE the city lights of Denver.

-- They turn off I-70 at Limon and head south.

-- Late at night, they pass the sign "Welcome to Chapman, Colorado." "The other parts of Colorado are prettier." They are both exhausted.

END MONTAGE

EXT. MAX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max's house is in an unkept neighborhood of poor houses. Brandon looks around nervously as he rolls to a stop.

MAX

Thanks for the lift. I'd give you more gas money, but I'm out!

Brandon chuckles, as Max grabs her backpack and sleeping bag.

BRANDON

Me too. Never would have made it back from Grand Junction without you. You were right again.

(beat, sad)

You've been right all along. 'Bout everything.

Max turns towards her house, and mumbles.

MAX

You would have made it if not for me, the least popular girl in the world!

She disappears in the front door. Brandon mumbles.

BRANDON

Still the least likely to succeed.

Max drives slowly down the street.

End Act Two

ACT THREE

INT. MAX'S HOUSE - DAY

Max and her Papá sit at the kitchen table with two ICE agents (30s-40s) wearing blue ICE jackets, and reviewing paperwork. Max's Mamá (45) brings fresh quesadillas and coffee to the table, as Max explains everything with a smile.

Max shows the ICE agents her university acceptance letters, and she hugs her parents.

The ICE agents look pleased, as they eat.

EXT. AUTO SHOP - DAY

Brandon, in mechanic's overalls, is beneath a car on a hoist finishing an oil change.

The Head Mechanic (40) in similar overalls, checks Brandon's work and gives him a pat on the back.

EXT. FIELD OF CROPS - DAY

We SEE Max, Papá, and Mamá walking through the field, weeding with hoes as they walk.

INT. BRANDON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We see Brandon in his room carefully reading a car mechanic manual and taking notes.

He stares at his phone right to him, but hesitates to pick it up.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max is in her room reviewing video of the "epic journey" on her laptop computer.

BEGIN MONTAGE -- MAX'S GOPRO VIDEO OF THE TRIP

-- We SEE the car leaving the car lot and stalling at the street.

-- We SEE the tractor in front of them on the dirt road heading to Sand Creek. It's a dust storm.

-- We SEE Irving going crazy, stomping around, and pretending to shoot imaginary arrows into Brandon and Max.

-- We SEE Brandon with his shirt off digging fence post holes for T. Edward.

-- We SEE Norm holding a gun on them from the back seat.

-- We SEE Brandon and Max taking parts out of junkyard cars.

-- We SEE the bison and the Rocky Mountains.

-- We SEE and HEAR the last clip Max took at the Vail Pass Rest Stop.

END MONTAGE

She stares at her phone right to her, but hesitates to pick it up. Instead, she opens a new page on her web browser: Craigslist. We HEAR Max's voice as she types.

MAX (V.O.)

I need to take a weekend trip all the way across Colorado on Innerstate 70. Must have a sleeping bag, GoPro, one-hundred dollars, and a '61 Corvette.

EXT. MAX'S HOUSE - DAY

Max sits outside her house in the late afternoon with a backpack, rolled-up sleeping bag, and a GoPro on a selfie-stick. Max wears cute shorts and a tank top. She speaks into the GoPro.

MAX

Friday afternoon. Wouldn't blame him for not showing up.

(looks around)

Might be busy at the auto shop.

(looks around)

Could easily have something better to do for a weekend.

(looks around)

Might have to study car manuals.

(looks around)

Might have to sort his sock drawer.

Down the street, Brandon slowly drives in her direction.

Brandon slows to a stop.

BRANDON

Bet I'm the third '61 Corvette to stop by this afternoon.

MAX

Fourth.

Brandon turns sincere.

BRANDON

Thanks for texting me the good news about your folks. Sorry I didn't text you back.

MAX

Forget it.

Brandon turns angry.

BRANDON

Not going to forget it. Not going to forget anything. Look, I'm not doing this for you. I'm doing it for me. I never got to complete my less-than-epic adventure. That pissed me off!

MAX

Sorry!

BRANDON

You're going off to college to become some big-shot lawyer, a doctor, or a third-grade teacher, and I'll always be the least likely to succeed!

Max sees that he's almost in tears. She smiles, and hops in.

MAX

Save it, Tod! We'll have to cover six-hours of driving per day. And I have a few stops planned, so step on it!

Brandon is stunned. He pauses, then cracks a weak smile.

BRANDON

Aye-aye, Captain Buz!

Brandon guns it, and it stalls. They laugh. He starts it, and races down the street. We HEAR the Route 66 theme song.

EXT. SAND CREEK MASSACRE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE - DUSK

Brandon drives into the FULL PARKING LOT, and he and Max look around. They don't see Irving. Their GoPros are rolling.

An Elderly Couple (60s) hobbles down the trail as fast they can, races to their car, hop in, and speed away.

Moments later, Irving comes down the same trail with his megaphone ready to go.

IRVING

I'll be damned! It's Brandon and Max.

(yells toward the headquarters building)
Call off the search, I found them!

BRANDON

Did you frighten another elderly couple?

IRVING

Did you kiss and make up?

Brandon and Max take a half-step away from each other, as we SEE an empty window at the Headquarters building.

Irving points the megaphone toward the empty window.

IRVING (CONT'D)

I have a confession to make!

(beat)

Who am I talking to? Everybody's out giving tours. Never been so busy as this past week!

Max and Brandon stare at Irving, who winks at them.

IRVING (CONT'D)

I'm not the raving lunatic you think I am!

MAX

What are you doing, Irving?

IRVING

I don't work here!

BRANDON

What?

IRVING

I'm a member of the tribal council.

Irving puts down the megaphone.

MAX

You're not a Park Interpreter?

IRVING

No, I'm a professor of Native American Studies at the university. I was just having a bit of fun with you and the others. My sister is the Park Interpreter here. She gives a great lecture on the hike, but they never want to offend anyone.

BRANDON

And you wanted to offend us?

IRVING

No, I wanted to inform you, even if the truth is uncomfortable.

Max smiles.

MAX

I learned a lot.

IRVING

Thanks.

MAX

I lived an hour from here my whole life, but never learned much about the Native American who walked this land before us.

BRANDON

We were cruel, heartless, conquerors.

MAX

Made our lives seem easy.

IRVING

No one's life is easy, but we all have the opportunity to make them meaningful.

Brandon has an epiphany. So does Max.

BRANDON

That's what you were teaching us!

MAX

I get it!

BRANDON

Me, too!

IRVING

Let's see if I can get some more coolant for your '61 Corvette.

BRANDON

Don't need it. It's fixed.

MAX

We didn't quite finish our epic journey, so we're completing it this weekend.

Irving uses the megaphone.

IRVING

This is your defining moment. The great Sioux Chief, Crazy Horse, said, "A very great vision is needed and the man who has it must follow it as the eagle seeks the deepest blue of the sky."

MAX

Huh?

Irving puts an arm around Max, and speaks to Brandon.

IRVING

Lone Man, a great Teton Sioux, said, "I have seen that in any great undertaking it is not enough for a man to depend simply upon himself."

Brandon looks bewildered.

BRANDON

Uh, okay.

Irving raises his index finger high in the air.

IRVING

"There are not enough Indians in the world to defeat the Seventh Cavalry."

(beat)

Never mind, that was George Armstrong Custer. Wait!

(MORE)

IRVING (CONT'D)

I know a better one! "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

MAX

Old Native American saying?

IRVING

No, it was Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu in the sixth-century B.C.

BRANDON

So says Wahanassatta, he who walks with his toes turned outward.

They all laugh.

IRVING

Hey, you were paying attention. I like that! You kids will have much success in life. This, I know to be true.

MAX

So, the megaphone, the marching all around like a madman, fits of anger -- all for our benefit?

IRVING

Sorry, just having some fun with you. Everybody's so serious around here!

(sarcastic)

Eight-hour massacre killing 230 Cheyenne and Arapaho people most of them women, children, and the elderly. Just forget about it!

Max and Brandon hug Irving.

MAX

I'll never forget about, thanks to you.

BRANDON

Me, neither, Irving. Thanks so much for taking the time to educate us.

MAX

Bit unorthodox, but effective.

Irving packs up, and grabs the megaphone again.

IRVING

Unorthodox? Don't get me started on religion. Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, "When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said 'Let us pray.' We closed our eyes. When we opened them we had the Bible and they had the land." Same thing here, Hawaii, everywhere!

MAX

Irving, we can hear you fine without the megaphone.

Irving turns off the megaphone.

IRVING

I get excited. Sorry.

(beat)

You came back to tell me how much you enjoyed my tour?

MAX

Wish everyone in the world could take your tour!

IRVING

Thanks. That means a lot to me.

Max and Brandon hug Irving.

MAX

We gotta make another stop in Burlington.

IRVING

I've got another tour in a half-hour. Thirty people signed up. Most ever! Drive safely, you two. May the Great Spirit guide you, as he did Tod and Buz on Route 66!

Brandon and Max hop in the car, and race off.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - NIGHT

It's dark, so Brandon turns on the new interior lights.

BRANDON

Don't see why we have to stop at T. Edward's place.

MAX

To pay him back our twenty-bucks each!

BRANDON

We worked hard for that money.

MAX

He taught us the value of hard work. I worked in the fields with my folks, first time since I started school. I appreciate them so much more now!

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Max knocks on T. Edward's door, with Brandon beside her. Brandon turns on his GoPro. T. Edward answers with a shotgun in hand.

T. EDWARD

What do you want?

MAX

We're here to pay you back.

Max and Brandon hold out twenty-bucks each.

T. EDWARD

You earned that money.

BRANDON

We can't take it from you.

T. Edward reaches out, and grabs the money.

T. EDWARD

Why not?

MAX

You're an unkind person, T. Edward. You threatened us with a rifle, threatened to call the sheriff, and threatened to call Immigration because we accidentally ran into your fencepost.

BRANDON

You called Max a wet-back. And we didn't mind working for you to make amends for hitting the fence...

MAX
(interrupting)
And you taught us the value of hard
work...

BRANDON
(interrupting)
Made us a real fine supper, you
did.

MAX
(interrupting)
But all that talk about the Earth
being flat -- we couldn't take
advantage of you.

T. EDWARD
Take advantage of me?

MAX
That so-called proof you had that
the bubble of a carpenter's level
is flat everywhere in the world.

Brandon hops up and down with excitement.

BRANDON
I bet Max has been waiting for this
all week!

MAX
Ever look at that bubble, T.
Edward?

T. EDWARD
I suppose.

MAX
Ever wonder why the bubble itself
isn't flat on the bottom?

T. EDWARD
No.

MAX
Only way that can happen is if
gravity pulls toward the center of
a very heavy sphere -- the Earth
has to be round or your bubble
would be flat!

T. Edward gets flustered.

BRANDON

And that last eclipse we had?
That's why the shadow on the sun
was curved like a crescent.

MAX

And that's why a ship's hull seems
to disappear as it sails away, but
you can still see the tip of the
mast.

Max turns to head back to the car, but Brandon obviously has more to say.

BRANDON

And those four angels strong enough
to hold up the four corners of the
Earth? Why can't you get them to
dig your fence-post holes?

T. Edward grabs his shotgun, as riled up as a hornet's nest.

Max and Brandon jump into the car and speed away. Max yells.

MAX

And never call a Mexican a wet-
back! It's disrespectful!

T. Edward aims, but doesn't fire his shotgun. He points it down, steps inside, and slams the door.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - NIGHT

Max fist-bumps Brandon who drives past Burlington on Interstate 70.

BRANDON

Guess I should have known it was
called Interstate 70.

MAX

Baltimore, Maryland to Utah?

BRANDON

Longer than I imagined.

MAX

Our world is as big as we make it.
A room, a town, a state, or the
universe.

Max looks up to the stars.

MAX (CONT'D)

Thanks for offering to complete the
epic journey, and special thanks
for taking me along!

Max edges closer to Brandon, and leans her head on his
shoulder.

BRANDON

Where to, Captain?

MAX

Keep driving 'til we fall off the
flat Earth, Tod.

BRANDON

Aye-aye, Buz.

They drive with the new interior lights on. Brandon keeps
filming.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Brandon pulls into the parking lot of a nice, but
inexpensive, hotel on the outskirts of Denver. Max is asleep
with her head on his shoulder.

BRANDON

Wake up. We're here.

Max struggles to wake.

MAX

Where?

BRANDON

Outskirts of Denver.

MAX

So, we sleep in the car, and sneak
in for the free breakfast in the
morning like usual?

Max pulls a credit card out of his shirt pocket.

BRANDON

Not if you got one of these.

MAX

How did you get a credit card?

BRANDON

Boss vouched for me at the bank.

MAX

I'll sleep in the car.

BRANDON

I won't try nothin' -- I promise!

MAX

I said, I'll sleep in the car.

BRANDON

Still don't trust me?

MAX

I trust you, Brandon. It's Tod I don't trust.

BRANDON

Tod? I just made him...

MAX

(interrupting)

I know, Max. I've never been in a room alone with a boy. I'm uncomfortable in tight spaces with other people. I was in school media center doing keyboarding, and I was fine until I realized Bobby Harrison was the only other person in the room, and I threw up instantly.

BRANDON

That was like sixth grade?

MAX

Like it was yesterday! I'll sleep in the car.

BRANDON

You gonna sleep in a car when you're off to college in a few months?

Max looks away.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

You'll be in a tiny dorm room with only one other person. Probably a dude!

Max shakes a little, then turns to Brandon.

MAX

What am I gonna do?

BRANDON
Practice, practice, practice.

Max takes a deep breath.

MAX
I guess so.
(beat)
You won't try anything?

BRANDON
Nothing.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Max showers, while Brandon, laying on one of the two beds, uploads video onto his laptop hooked to his GoPro.

Max exits, dressed in her tank top and shorts.

MAX
Bathrooms free.

BRANDON
Almost done.

MAX
WiFi! I need to look at those universities again.

Brandon looks away, disappointed, while Max pulls her laptop out of her backpack.

BRANDON
Think I'll shower.

Max pays him little attention.

LATER

Brandon exits the bathroom with combed hair and wearing boxer shorts. Max is in her bed, turned the other direction, and pretending to be asleep.

Brandon slips into his bed, and turns off his bedside light.

Brandon doesn't see that Max is shaking.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Brandon turns into the junkyard. Max waves at Norm and Ester, and yells to them. Ester's hand is un-bandaged. Brandon has his GoPro on.

MAX

Just driving through to make sure everything's okay.

ESTER

Great to you! Glad you stopped in.

BRANDON

Hey, Ester. Hey, Norm.

NORM

Guess what was towed in here two days ago! A '61 Corvette!

BRANDON

A real one?

NORM

No. Like yours.

Brandon looks disappointed. Max is excited.

MAX

Did it have a working fuel gauge?

NORM

Sure did! Was gonna mail it, but never got your address.

ESTER

Or your names. Ha! Never thought we'd see you to thank you.

Norm puts his arm around Ester.

MAX

That's sweet!

ESTER

He's the sweetest thing in the world!

Ester squeezes Norm like a python.

NORM

Picked up a few moves in the joint.

BRANDON

That's great, Norm. This was Max's idea to come by. Wanted to thank you both.

ESTER

What for? You helped me out when I was injured. And business around here picked up incredibly this week! Can't figure it out!

NORM

Made more this week than the past three months.

Norm runs to the office.

ESTER

He beat the daylights out of my ex-husband when he come by asking for money! I knew Norm was the guy for me. His daughter, the cop, came by, and couldn't be happier. She's getting his parole switched to here.

Norm returns with a gas gauge.

NORM

Can I put it in for ya?

BRANDON

I can do it when we get home. We're on our way to Grand Junction!

NORM

Again?

MAX

Never made it the first time. My fault. But we won't fail this time!

Everybody hugs. Max hops in the driver's seat.

MAX (CONT'D)

Denver traffic? Bring it on!

Brandon keeps the GoPro rolling as they wave goodbye.

BEGIN MONTAGE -- From Denver to Vail Pass with GoPros rolling.

-- We SEE Max driving easily in Denver traffic.

-- Max drives past the bison at Lookout Mountain.
-- Brandon drives through the Eisenhower Tunnel.
-- They SEE Copper Mountain and the signs to Vail.
-- They turn off I-70 at the Vail Pass Rest Stop.

END MONTAGE

EXT. VAIL PASS REST STOP - DAY

Brandon hops out of the car, needing to use the bathroom.

BRANDON

Watch our stuff for a minute, will
ya?

MAX

Sure.

Max takes out her smartphone. She checks her text messages,
and she's alarmed.

MAX (CONT'D)

Seven text messages? I never have
more than one?

A text message from a SARAH R has a YouTube video link. Max
taps on the link and sees herself outside the hotel they
stayed in the previous night!

Max sees there are dozens of uploaded videos by Brandon on
YouTube, with thousands of followers.

MAX (CONT'D)

Bastards' a YouTuber! A Goddamn
Youtube celebrity. Look at all
those followers! Haven't they got
anything better to do with their
lives!

Brandon comes back to the car, and hops in the driver's seat.
Without warning, Max punches him in the jaw.

MAX (CONT'D)

So, your epic adventure trip on
Innerstate 70 is a YouTube
sensation?

BRANDON

Ow! How was I supposed to know the
videos would go viral?

MAX

What the hell does viral mean?

BRANDON

Means we got thousands of followers, YouTube sponsors, and maybe an offer to do web series or maybe a pilot for a TV show! I was going to tell you when we got to Grand Junction!

Max turns away.

MAX

I see. That's why visitation has skyrocketed at the Sand Creek Massacre site?

BRANDON

They loved Irving's tour. It was real. It touched people.

MAX

And T. Edward? Does he know he's a laughing stock?

BRANDON

I'm not gonna tell him. I edited out his last name!

MAX

How many T. Edward's do you think there are? He's gonna sue you?

BRANDON

Did you see where you told him off! You're a sensation! You're like the critical thinker of the Internet!

MAX

My folks? Your mom? Do they know?

BRANDON

They don't watch YouTube videos.

MAX

What about your boss?

BRANDON

It's how I got the job at the auto shop. He saw us taking parts off cars at the junkyard. Wants to hire you, too?

Max brightens.

MAX

The irony! We didn't want our class to define us with their informal web-polls, and now you're okay with a YouTube audience defining us!

Brandon shrugs.

BRANDON

I guess not! You're right again.

MAX

Of course, I could use the money for school. The Auto Shop pays three times what they do in the fields.

BRANDON

And the sponsors may provide a lot more!

MAX

Really?

Brandon pleads with Max, and she softens.

BRANDON

I didn't know. Honest!

MAX

You should have told me!

BRANDON

Sorry.

Brandon leans over and kisses her. She doesn't resist! In fact, she kisses him like crazy!

MAX

What are we waiting for?! Let's finish this epic journey!

Brandon looks over and sees that Max has her GoPro on.

Brandon HOOTS and HOLLERS as they race off to the tune of *Route 66*.

BRANDON

Tod and Buz are a hit!

MAX

We're going to have to add a better soundtrack!

They laugh!

BEGIN MONTAGE -- From Vail Pass to the Utah state line with GoPros rolling.

-- We SEE Brandon driving toward Grand Junction.

-- Max drives past Grand Junction toward Utah.

-- At the sign that reads, "Welcome to Utah," Max slams on the brakes.

-- We see Brandon driving back towards Colorado. They are laughing into the camera.

END MONTAGE

INT. CAR - NIGHT

We SEE Max driving, with Brandon fast asleep in the passenger's seat.

We see the town's welcoming sign that reads: "Welcome to Chapman, Colorado. The other parts of Colorado are prettier."

Max slams on the brakes. Brandon wakes up.

BRANDON

What are we stopping for?

MAX

Gotta fix something. I'm prepared.

Max pulls out a small tube of black acrylic paint, and a paint brush from her backpack.

MAX (CONT'D)

Been wanting to this since we came back last time.

Max paints a few words on the sign, while Brandon captures it on the GoPro.

The sign now reads, "Welcome to Chapman, Colorado. The other parts of Colorado are prettier, but this is HOME."

Brandon cheers. He hops out of the car to hug and kiss Max on the lips. The kiss lasts an uncomfortably long time for them both.

MAX (CONT'D)
Thanks for everything, Tod.

BRANDON
Forget it, Buz.

MAX
I'll never forget it, Brandon.

BRANDON
Me neither, Maxine.

We SEE the "record" light is on Brandon's GoPro!

BEGIN MONTAGE -- Summer scenes from Chapman from their YouTube channel.

-- We SEE Brandon and Max in mechanics' overalls working on cars at the Auto Shop.

-- We SEE Max and Brandon drinking milkshakes outside the Burger Giant. They are laughing and kissing.

-- We SEE Max reading textbooks, and Brandon reading car-service manuals on a blanket in the City Park. They're having a picnic.

-- We see Brandon in his bedroom loading up video onto their YouTube channel.

END MONTAGE

EXT. USED-CAR LOT - DAY

Max waits on the curb for Brandon to drive up in his car.

Max stands, as Brandon jumps out to hug her.

BRANDON
Sure you wanna do this?

MAX
More than anything. You? Not too late to back out!

BRANDON
It's what I saved my money all summer for.

MAX
Me, too!

BRANDON
You think it's a fair price?

MAX

Saw it on Craigslist! Gotta be fair.

BRANDON

I don't know. You're the only who called.

MAX

I made my offer! You accepted! Fork over the keys and the pink slip.

BRANDON

I fixed the gas gauge for ya.

MAX

I'll have to deduct ten bucks.

BRANDON

But I added something.

MAX

More interior lights?

Brandon leads her to the back of the car. He points to a new bumper sticker that reads "University of California, Berkeley."

Max hugs Brandon with tears of joy.

BRANDON

Put out your hand.

Max holds out her hand.

Brandon drops the keys into her hand, then holds her hand closed.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Driving back for Christmas break can be treacherous. Ice and snow. I put a set of chains in the trunk. But you cancel if there's too much snow!

MAX

Got it, Tod.

Brandon tears up.

BRANDON

Aye-eye, Captain. Buz. Max. I mean, Maxine. I'm really going to miss you.

MAX
You can visit me.

BRANDON
I know. I know. But, Chapman...

MAX
(interrupts)
I know. It's home.

They hug and kiss.

Then Max gets in the car, and drives slowly away. Her GoPro captures Brandon waving goodbye.

The beautiful moment is interrupted by Harry, the used-car salesman, who drives up behind Brandon with an identical '84 Chrysler LeBaron convertible.

Harry jumps out holding a clipboard.

HARRY
Took me a while to find this baby!

BRANDON
Oh, I know!

HARRY
Initial here, here, here, here, and
sign here.

Brandon grabs the clipboard.

BRANDON
I know. Needs a little work.

HARRY
Needs brakes, I took off fifty
bucks. The timing belt is shot. She
burning oil. Needs a full tune-up
and probably a battery. The tires
are bald. It may have been that
flood in Houston, Texas...

Harry's voice FADES as Brandon's thoughts turn to Max.

EXT. COUNTY ROAD - DAY

We SEE Max wiping a tear from her eyes as her car, filled with luggage and books, drives slowly out of town.

She has trouble staying in her lane.

We see the Berkeley bumper sticker.

The GoPro catches the "Welcome to Chapman" sign as she drives away.

End Act Three

FADE OUT.

THE END