

FORTUNA

Written by

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A man speaks over black. His speech pattern reveals an extensive English education somewhere outside the States.

VOICE (V.O.)

Your ancestors were bandits, tiger trainers, and warriors. Just be cool, be...dangerous.

1 EXT. PARK - DAY

1

A WOMAN sits on a bench with the LA skyline behind. An uptight man named ABEER (30) sits into frame. He clearly failed "Looking Casual 101."

SOMEONE'S silhouette watches nearby.

ABEER

Do you like raccoons?

The woman leaves without a word. Abeer deflates.

SOMEONE

(to himself)

Offer a second chance.

As the woman's heels click away, ELI WALKER (35), the someone watching nearby, leans in.

ELI

Well, that was painful.

As Abeer's eyes question the stranger, Eli flashes a winning smile and flicks out a business card.

ELI (CONT'D)

Eli Walker, life coach.

2 INT. ELI'S OFFICE - DAY

2

Eli paces energetically across the sleek, modern office. Abeer stands at a whiteboard.

ELI

But why do you hate your name?

Abeer points to the board, which says "Abeer Bhatt" and "a beer butt" written below it.

ABEER

Being called "a beer butt" my whole life!

ELI

Yes! Because a name is a brand! So
what do you want your brand to say?

Words like "happiness," "confidence," and "handsome" fill the
board. Abeer circles one:

ABEER

Danger.

ELI

I love it, yes! And what name says
"danger" to you?

Music builds; push in on Abeer.

ABEER

...Kevin.

Eli smiles wide.

ELI

That's a great name.

Upbeat music lifts as a MONTAGE BEGINS MOS:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 3 | INT. ELI'S OFFICE - DAY | 3 |
| | Eli discusses his plan on a whiteboard. He points to
"confidence drills." | |
| 4 | EXT. PARK - DAY | 4 |
| | Eli points to a girl. Abeer approaches, but she shakes her
head. Eli reassures Abeer. | |
| 5 | INT. ELI'S OFFICE - DAY | 5 |
| | Eli coaches while Abeer handwrites a list: "ten awesome
things about Kevin." It has things like "intriguing," "knows
how to handle a gun," and "bloodhoundish tracker skills." | |
| 6 | EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT | 6 |
| | Eli and Abeer are dining outside, eating tacos. They're
laughing and joking like friends. Abeer wants a picture. Eli
isn't into it. Abeer snaps a shot anyway. | |

- 7 INT. ELI'S OFFICE - DAY 7
- Eli taps the next phase of Kevin's Life Plan: "Check financials and assess K's fiscal health."
- Jump cut: Abeer hands over bank statements with OVER THREE MILLION in the account. Abeer goes back to his "10 Awesome Things." Eli snaps pics of the account numbers.
- 8 INT. ABEER'S HOUSE - DAY 8
- Abeer walks to his door, ready to attack the day. A bank alert pings on his phone: "Suspicious account activity." A text from Eli appears just below: "Got shingles, practice canceled." Abeer looks suspicious.
- 9 INT. ELI'S OFFICE - HALLWAY - DAY 9
- Abeer walks hesitantly down the hall and enters Eli's office: it's bare. He checks his account balance: \$513.
- 10 EXT. SUIT SHOP - DAY 10
- Eli exits the shop dressed sharply. He tugs his fancy cuffs, pleased with himself.
- ELI
Thanks, Beer Butt. See ya never.
- 11 INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY 11
- Eli scrolls on an article with interest: "New cryptocurrency Rooster/RUZR up 300%!" He's in his apartment.
- JUMP CUTS of Eli clicking buy, buy, buy!
- JUMP CUT: Eli's smartphone shows a new article: "Once-favored 'to the moon,' RUZR down 17,000%!"
- Eli tosses his phone in disgust.
- 12 EXT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY 12
- Eli exits and sees A BILLBOARD OF HIS FACE from Abeer's picture. Massive letters read, "THIS MAN WILL STEAL YOUR MONEY AND HAPPINESS. DON'T TRUST ELI WALKER." Eli pulls a hat over his eyes and walks inside.
- END MONTAGE.

13 INT. HARV'S APARTMENT - DAY

13

Cluttered floor, dirty dishes; sunlight beams underscore dust in the air. The clues spell one thing: here be bachelors.

CLOSE ON: a pencil tapping a YELLOW LEGAL PAD.

We see TONY WALLACE (25). His look is baggy pants and ironic tank tops. He lays on the couch with the notepad on his knees; he's deep in thought.

A video call rings on his phone: it's HARVEY (60), a classic retired cop with a Hawaiian shirt and Tom Selleck mustache.

TONY

What's up, Uncle Harv?

Tony focuses on the page, not looking at the screen.

HARVEY

Calls are the only way I get your attention these days.

Harv holds a newspaper up to the camera.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

I'll bring the jobs section over when I finish the crossword.

TONY

I know my calling.

HARVEY

Callings don't buy the mustard.

Tony looks inspired.

TONY

"Buy the mustard." There's a joke in there somewhere.

He writes.

TONY (CONT'D)

Try this on for size: someone says "something doesn't buy the mustard," and this old guy who's hard of hearing says, "I must have heard you wrong." Cause it sounds like "mustard."

HARVEY

Bud, I supported you trying comedy, but at a certain point, maybe it's time to grow up. Comedians have to be funny, right?

TONY

Someday I'll write the funniest joke anyone's ever heard, and you'll laugh your stupid head off.

Tony hangs up the call.

A SONICALLY LOUD CRUNCH comes from behind. Reveal Harvey polishing off a Costco-sized bag of potato chips. He was there the whole time.

TONY (CONT'D)

I know you get glutton-y when you're worried about me, but don't take it out on that family-sized bag of carbs.

HARVEY

Leave me alone. I'm retired.

Harv upends the bag to get every crumb into his mouth.

14

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - HALLWAY - DAY

14

Eli walks confidently down the carpeted passage. A man calls out. It's BENJAMIN MOSES "FRANK" FRANKLIN (65), with a slightly rounded body and ex-cop sharpness.

FRANK

Just a minute.

He strides up to Eli and whips out a notepad.

ELI

Can I help you?

FRANK

Easy there, pretty boy.

Frank takes notes.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Suspect unknown in apartment complex. No visible markings. Approximately six feet tall. Could be responsible for ramen theft last week.

ELI

For someone who once called me an old-timey insult, what was it-- grifter?--I'm surprised you don't recognize me, Frank.

The retiree puts on glasses and examines Eli; recognition washes over his face.

FRANK

Haven't seen you in about six months. Harv's convict nephew.

ELI

Convict? For a few nights in Juvie? You make it sound like we killed someone, Frank.

FRANK

Harv and me spent the best part of our lives putting rags like you behind bars, and you were out to give him a heart attack. The less he sees of you the better.

ELI

Harv is a tank. Couldn't kill him if we tried.

FRANK

If it was the old days, I'd be on you like a pair of Levi's. I just wish I could be the one to bust you someday.

ELI

Love these chats. See you in another six months.

He walks away.

As Eli turns a corner, he runs into Harv, who's carrying grocery bags of junk food.

HARVEY

Back so soon?

ELI

And people wonder where I get my sarcasm. How is he?

HARVEY

He doesn't even remember what day it is.

They open the door.

15 INT. HARV'S APARTMENT - DAY

15

Harvey and Eli enter.

HARVEY
Little help with the groceries?

Tony doesn't look up.

TONY
Naw, I'm good.

ELI
Guess who's taking you out for your
birthday!

TONY
Brother-mine!

Tony jumps up and hugs his brother.

HARVEY
Oh sure, he gets up for you.

16 EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

16

The two brothers are talking over the remains of a meal.

TONY
You've been in LA this whole time?

ELI
Yeah, man. Had to keep a low
profile. I'd hate for you to do
time again.

TONY
I don't care if you're straight or
conning if you're in my life.

ELI
I gotta tell you, I'm glad you said
that. Due to unspecified reasons, I
can no longer show my face in LA.

Tony holds up his phone showing a news article about Eli's
billboard.

ELI (CONT'D)

Okay, due to specified reasons, I can no longer show my face in LA.

TONY

What happened?

ELI

Well. I made a bunch on a con and lost it all to crypto. I'm so tired of this life, man, I want the straight and narrow. Landed this part-time gig at a hardware store, but I need twelve hundred for living expenses...apartment, bus fare, and with luck, maybe have enough to eat. One last con to set me up, then I'm in your life for good.

TONY

Then what's the play? Fiddle game? Melon drop? Life coach?

ELI

Did I leave any Turkish flour with you?

TONY

There's a couple bags stashed in the garage. Do you think the cupcake pat will finally work?

ELI

I got a new game.

The first 1:13 of "Lucky Song" by Dean Martin starts.

17 INT. HARV'S GARAGE - DAY 17

Tony moves a pile of boxes and pulls two bags of TURKISH FLOUR from the bottom container.

18 INT. HARV'S APARTMENT - DAY 18

Eli and Tony measure small amounts of flour into baggies.

ELI (V.O.)

We package it out. Tell kids it's a new wonder drug.

19 EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY 19

Where we left them.

ELI

I can't be the face, so you push it
at schools.

20 EXT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY 20

Tony looks around sketchily.

TONY (V.O.)

Wait, won't this stuff drop you?

21 EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY 21

At the table.

ELI

Only if you ingest like half a
container. The amount we're
selling, one snoot-sniff, wouldn't
hurt a fly. If you think about it,
we're keeping kids off drugs by
selling them a fake product.

TONY

That weirdly makes sense. I'm in.

22 INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - HALLWAY - DAY 22

Eli and Tony walk down the hallway in high spirits.

ELI

Why do people even give teenagers
money?

Eli thumbs through a bundle of cash. He peels off a large
amount and gives it to Tony. They approach the door, and Eli
pockets his stash.

ELI (CONT'D)

Big win, little brother. Don't tell
Uncle Harv.

TONY

Booya!

Tony puts his hands on his hips and does something like a
dab.

ELI
What's that?

TONY
Chicken dab!

He does it again.

ELI
That's not a thing.

TONY
It's catching on.

ELI
I guarantee it's not.

TONY
Big time.

Tony presents his key and pushes the door.

23

INT. HARV'S APARTMENT - DAY

23

The brothers enter, and the song stops suddenly as SOMETHING SHOCKS THEM.

CLOSE ON: Giant stack of half-eaten pancakes.

CLOSE ON: Turkish flour bag, half empty.

CLOSE ON: Flour spilled on table.

Harvey lays ON THE GROUND. Eli runs over and checks his neck.

ELI
Close the door.

TONY
(worried)
Why?

Tony shuts the door.

ELI
We killed Uncle Harvey.

A HUGE KNOCK on the door.

FRANK (O.C.)
Harv, it's Frank. We still on for lunch?

Tony looks like he's about to say something. Eli gives him the "don't do it" signal. Tony starts a gruff imitation.

TONY

...No.

FRANK

You never miss a meal.

TONY

Had bad shrimp.

FRANK

For breakfast?

TONY

Y...es. Breakfast shrimp.

FRANK

You still want a ride tonight?

TONY

Mmmhmm.

FRANK

I'll circle back in a few hours.

TONY

You got it.

Frank's footsteps fade down the hall.

The boys talk in harsh whispers.

ELI

Nicely done, Oscar the Grouch.

TONY

Comedians have to do impressions!

ELI

Comedians will get canceled for manslaughter if they're found with their uncle's body.

TONY

Should I call an ambulance?

ELI

Only if you want to do time--he died on our product. And he's been gone for hours.

TONY

Then we have to bury him.

ELI

Agreed. A funeral parlor asks questions. We do it ourselves.

TONY

Where in Los Angeles County can you put a body that hikers, joggers, dog-walkers, and cops won't find it in 24 hours?

ELI

Nowhere. That's why we're going to...Fortuna.

24

EXT. LA RIVER - DAY

24

Harv's car is parked on the cement duct. Eli checks a LARGE DUFFLE then slams the trunk. Tony stands near. The sun sets.

ELI

Uncle Harv's cabin we used to visit over summer in Humboldt County.

TONY

He still has that place?

ELI

Yep. Used it as a tax shelter recently.

TONY

I don't know, Eli.

ELI

Come on, he's already in the trunk. We pop up north, drop him in the ground tonight, and we're free and clear. He would want to be buried there anyway, so we're honoring him by doing it this way.

TONY

That weirdly makes sense.

ELI

I'm glad to hear you say that. Now, we're gonna be fugitives.

Eli pulls out his phone and chucks it in the river.

ELI (CONT'D)
 Can't be traceable. Goodbye
 Glendale.

TONY
 We'll be back though, right?

ELI
 Oh yeah, for sure. Now get rid of
 yours. I'll be in the car.

Eli enters the driver's seat.

Tony takes out his phone and looks at it nostalgically.

TONY
 Harv paid twelve hundred dollars
 for you.

Tony winds up. He slips the phone back in his pocket.

TONY (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 What's the worst that'll happen?

He turns and smiles.

TONY (CONT'D)
 On the road!

25 EXT. HARV'S CAR - DAY 25

Tony hops into THE DISTINCT VEHICLE. The car pulls away along
 the cement riverbank.

TONY (V.O.)
 Can I drive?

ELI (V.O.)
 No. We literally just left.

26 INT. ABEER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 26

Abeer sits in the dark. The decor is opulent, but his
 expression shows he no longer sees good in the world. Fast
 food wrappers and half-eaten meals cover the couch, betraying
 his life over several days.

He addresses his reflection in a black laptop screen.

ABEER

I'm ashamed of your hiding behind
an anonymous billboard. Classic
Abeer move.

He paces.

ABEER (CONT'D)

I should let it go.

He catches his reflection again.

ABEER (CONT'D)

No. I won't.

Inspiration hits.

ABEER (CONT'D)

What would Kevin do?

Abeer smiles evilly, and a peppy MONTAGE STARTS.

27

INT. ABEER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

27

Abeer smooths a wrinkled hamburger wrapper and finger paints
the word "Eli" in mustard.

ABEER (V.O.)

Step one, find Eli.

JUMP CUT: Abeer leaps in front of the mirror with a black
jacket, motorcycle boots, and aviators.

ABEER

Looking good.

JUMP CUT: Abeer googles "find off-grid person." Ad pops up:
"pay for background check! We show home address, car
registration, and criminal record!" He smiles.

JUMP CUT: He reads the report.

ABEER (CONT'D)

No known address...Eli Wallace,
alias Eli Walker. Known associate,
Tony Wallace, brother. Cell phone
number...

He types the number into a PHONE TRACKER APP.

JUMP CUT: Abeer sucks a straw. He turns the cup over. Empty.

ABEER (CONT'D)
Step two, hydrate.

28 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

28

The BARISTA calls out a drink:

BARISTA
Medium upside-down coffee served in
large cup with wilted cream and a
splash of lemon... Karen?

Abeer leans in.

ABEER
That's Kevin.

29 INT. ABEER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

29

Hands arrange French fries into a pistol.

ABEER (V.O.)
Step three, get a firearm.

JUMP CUT: Abeer talks on the phone with DODGE (40), a no-nonsense, ex-military salesman.

ABEER
How would I go about purchasing
your finest gun-pistol?

DODGE
Present valid ID, proof of
residence, pay for firearm
knowledge exam, take exam, perform
weapon handling test, pay for
background check. Assuming no
mental health stuff or history of
violence, we sell you a gun in ten
days.

ABEER
That's too long. What about the
"gun show loophole?"

DODGE
Those laws apply to gun shows too.

ABEER
Really? I always heard different.
Buying in another state?

DODGE

If you're a resident, and you have to honor their waiting period.

ABEER

Private sale?

DODGE

Only through a federally-licensed firearms dealer.

ABEER

What are the other options?

DODGE

There are none. Anything else, you're looking at felony charges.
(sarcastic)
But hey, if you want to go to prison, try Craigslist.

ABEER

Craigslist, got it.

DODGE

No, that's not--

Abeer hangs up.

JUMP CUT: Abeer holds the "10 Awesome Things" list.

ABEER

Step four, ask: what would Kevin really do?

The tracker app shows two dots: a red one moves north, and a blue dot hovers over Pacific Palisades.

ABEER (CONT'D)

Kevin would assume Eli's on the run with his associate, track the brother's phone, go on an epic road trip full of memories and, who knows, maybe even make a lasting friendship. But mostly, Kevin would do illegal, murderly things to Eli Wallace.

END MONTAGE.

30 EXT. ABEER'S HOUSE - DAY 30

Abeer's Tesla Model X pulls out of the driveway. If it didn't have a silent motor, the peel out would be impressive.

31 EXT. GAS STATION - DAY 31

Eli adds oil at the front of the car then shuts the hood. He approaches the back, inserts the container, and slams the trunk, revealing a HIGHWAY PATROLMAN!

PATROLMAN

Hi there.

Eli jumps.

ELI

Didn't see you, officer.

PATROLMAN

I recognize your face--you're not fooling anyone with that hat.

ELI

How's that, officer?

A tense moment.

PATROLMAN

I've seen you on the television!
Now what show was it...This Is Us?

Eli leans into the misunderstanding.

ELI

That's the one.

PATROLMAN

You play the dad in the flashbacks!

ELI

I play the dad in the flashbacks.

PATROLMAN

What was your favorite episode to film?

INTERCUT: Tony is rocking out to music and singing into car keys. His finger BRUSHES the trunk button.

ELI

You gotta love them all.

The trunk pops open. Eli shoves it down.

PATROLMAN
You got that right!

The trunk pops up again. Eli pushes it closed.

PATROLMAN (CONT'D)
That's a short in your wiring
harness. I can take a look.

The officer steps forward.

ELI
I couldn't ask you to.

The trunk pops up again. Eli elbows it down and holds it. It keeps pushing up.

PATROLMAN
No trouble at all!

ELI
That's all right!

Eli hops on the trunk and sits there. The trunk struggles to open for a moment. Then it fully stops.

ELI (CONT'D)
See? Good as new.

PATROLMAN
If you say so.

The cop walks off shaking his head.

PATROLMAN (CONT'D)
I can't get over it, Milo
Ven...Ven...Venti... That guy was
here!

32 INT. HARV'S CAR - DAY

32

Eli jumps in the driver's seat. Tony is talking way too loud from the cranked music. He holds up his yellow pad.

TONY
TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK OF THIS ONE.
IT HAS A BUNNY RABBIT IN A PAIR OF
JEANS.

Eli spins the volume down.

ELI
 Next time you wanna sabotage me,
 just turn state's witness. It's
 quicker that way.

Tony is confused.

TONY
 ...Do you want to hear the joke?

ELI
 (eventually)
 Sure.

TONY
 So this bunny rabbit is a jean-
 fiend, right? And he goes to
 Brentwood in the middle of
 summer...

33 INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - HALLWAY - DAY 33

Detective Frank knocks on Harv's door.

FRANK
 Harv, you there? We're gonna be
 late for LARFPA, and you know how
 Allie gets.

No answer. Frank knocks again. He looks down and sees a trail
 of WHITE POWDER FOOTPRINTS. He pulls out a wind-up camera and
 snaps a shot; Detective Frank's on the case.

34 EXT. HARV'S GARAGE - DAY 34

Frank squats and pokes a pencil at a final footprint. He
 squints like that will help him figure out the mystery.

He rolls the garage door open.

TIGHT ON: his reaction as the interior is revealed.

The garage is bare.

FRANK
 Huh. Car's gone.

Frank sees someone nearby: DIAMOND (28), with curly hair and
 a great smile. She's hosing down potted plants. Frank snaps
 out his notepad and approaches.

DIAMOND

How's it going, Frank?

FRANK

Hi, Diamond. Got some questions for you.

DIAMOND

Okay, but first, lemme tell you a crazy story. I came outside just as Tony and some other guy finished loading a heavy bag in Harvey's trunk. Tony took the passenger seat and the other guy drove. And you know what the funny thing was?

(deep breath)

The driver was a Caucasian male, approximately thirty-four, six-foot-one, slim-fit, with chestnut hair and a five-day beard.

Frank realizes what she's saying and writes feverishly to catch up.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)

He wore a vest over white shirt with French cuffs and a tucked-in burgundy scarf. No accessories or jewelry, and no eccentric markings or tattoos. Standout feature: piercing eyes. Speech, educated but accessible. Vocabulary indicated Master's degree, but people skills show extroverted profession. Conclusion: life coach or dentist. The vehicle turned left at high speed. Route indicates connection with Interstate-5, northbound.

She comes out of robotic, fact mode and smiles personably.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)

Isn't that a funny story? Now what was it you wanted to ask me?

Frank flips his pad closed.

FRANK

I think you're gonna ace that academy exam.

Diamond goes back to watering. The flowing water blends into the sound of SOMEONE GURGLING.

35 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY 35

An appealing woman with a unique clothing style stands into frame. Her name is ZOEY TAYLOR (35).

She swishes a liquid the way she does everything: with methodical, intentional movements.

She caps a mouthwash bottle and spits the blue stuff into the desert.

Zoey enters the passenger seat of an idling car.

36 EXT. RYAN'S CAR - DAY 36

A VO conversation transpires between Zoey and a driver we never see named RYAN (late 20s).

ZOEY (V.O.)
You can drive now.

RYAN (V.O.)
(annoyed)
Are you serious about going all the way north?

The car pulls away.

ZOEY (V.O.)
I have to.

RYAN (V.O.)
Sure, you have to, but it doesn't seem fair the app doesn't tell me the location till I pick you up.

ZOEY (V.O.)
But if you leave now, you're worried I'll give you one star.

37 INT. RYAN'S CAR - DAY 37

His foot presses the accelerator.

38 EXT. RYAN'S CAR - DAY 38

The sound of a GURGLING STOMACH.

ZOEY (V.O.)
Oh no. I didn't get it all out.

RYAN (V.O.)
Are you serious?

ZOEY (V.O.)
Stop the car!

39 INT. RYAN'S CAR - DAY 39

Ryan's foot SLAMS the brake.

40 EXT. RYAN'S CAR - DAY 40

Zoey bolts out clutching her stomach. She finds a bush and doubles over with the wet slap of vomit.

She stands with her back to the highway. The car PEELS AWAY. Zoey looks around.

ZOEY
Ryan?

Nobody for miles.

ZOEY (CONT'D)
(exasperated)
Oh, come on!

41 INT. RYAN'S CAR - DAY 41

CLOSE ON: Purse on seat.

RYAN (V.O.)
Give me one star without a phone.

CLOSE ON: Zoey's phone rattling in the cupholder.

42 EXT. HARV'S CAR - DAY 42

The vehicle travels through miles of open country.

TONY (V.O.)
...And the bunny rabbit says,
"stew? Sounds like walrus
propaganda to me!" Get it? Prop-
aganda?

A beat of silence.

ELI (V.O.)
What else you got?

TONY (V.O.)
 How 'bout we stop for a bite? Being
 hilarious works up the ol' tasties.

43 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY 43

Abeer's Tesla cruises.

44 INT. ABEER'S CAR - DAY 44

Wearing his shades, jacket, and boots, Abeer actually looks pretty good.

With the phone tracker on the dash and an open laptop on the passenger seat, he's the captain of a mobile command center.

45 INT. FRANK'S CAR - DAY 45

Frank drives a wide Cadillac. He wears an analog watch.

SPLIT SCREEN: Between Frank's car and Abeer's Tesla. The two vehicles, high tech and old school, display the gap between their generations.

46 EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY 46

CHYRON: Lost Hills, CA.

Eli leans against an exterior wall, eating a sandwich.

Zoey shows up in the blurred background. She sees Eli, fixes her hair, and rushes over.

ZOEY
 Can I borrow your phone?

ELI
 Don't have one.

ZOEY
 Who doesn't have a phone?

ELI
 You, for instance. Me, this guy.

Tony waves.

ZOEY
 Well, I'm stranded out here.

ELI
Sounds like a you problem.

ZOEY
Where are you guys going?

TONY
Fortuna!

Eli gives him a "shut up" face.

ZOEY
I'm going to Humboldt County, too.
What if I borrow your backseat?

ELI
What if you don't?

TONY
Come on, man, Harv would help her
out.

ELI
Harv is the reason we can't.

ZOEY
I can't pay you--a guy took off
with my phone and purse--but I'm a
really quiet passenger, and I'll
build a free website for you guys.

ELI
Oh, a free website, wow. No.

TONY
It's the right thing to do.

ELI
Nothing you can say will convince
me.

TONY
That's fine. I can always tell her
about Harv and everything...

ELI
One thing you can say will convince
me.
(to Zoey)
Backseat's all yours. Don't slow me
down.

47

INT. HARV'S CAR - DAY

47

Zoey sits comfortably--already at home in the back. Tony can't help staring through the visor mirror with a big smile.

ZOEY

So what's the "everything"?

ELI

What?

ZOEY

What are you afraid smiling guy was gonna tell me?

ELI

It's personal. Why're you so desperate to go north?

Zoey looks distant.

ZOEY

That's personal.

ELI

There ya go. Maybe we just drive in silence for a while the way the Lord intended.

ZOEY

(to Tony)

What's your story?

TONY

I'm Tony. I'm gonna be a comedian.

ZOEY

Oh wow! My grandpa wanted to be a comic but never made it. When he passed, I swore I'd help aspiring artists someday. I guess building a website counts. Are you performing anywhere?

TONY

I haven't done any gigs yet.

ELI

By those standards, I'm Rodney Dangerfield.

ZOEY

You should lay off him.

ELI
Comedians have thick skin.

ZOEY
After years of stage work. They
need nurturing at first.

ELI
I'm confused, are you a web
developer or an entertainment
psychologist?
(to Tony)
Are you wounded by my realism?

TONY
I don't mind.

He kinda does.

ZOEY
What have you got?

TONY
(to Zoey)
I haven't perfected my routine yet,
but want to hear something?

ZOEY
Let me have it!

Tony's excitement at a new audience shows. He flips through
his notebook.

TONY
Try this one: cats have nine lives,
but what do you get if you kill
them ten times?

ZOEY
I don't know.

TONY
Tired!

Crickets.

ZOEY
...Death jokes aren't really my
genre. How about another?

TONY
Yeah, no, that's okay. I have this
one about a bunny rabbit you'll
really love.

Zoey's stomach gurgles. She clutches it.

ZOEY

Pull over.

ELI

Carjacking us already? It's only been...

(checks dash)

Fourteen minutes.

ZOEY

That's exactly how often I get carsick.

ELI

Would have been good to know.

TONY

Don't you throw up, cause then I'll want to throw up.

ELI

Why not ten or twenty, why exactly fourteen minutes?

ZOEY

(hurriedly)

I don't know what to tell you, it's a biological rhythm. Unless you're happy in the splash zone, you should probably pull over.

Eli turns right. Zoey jumps out and does her business.

Tony sees Eli's mind working evilly, so he grabs the key.

TONY

Are you actually thinking of abandoning her out here? Even thinking that makes my nausea worse.

Zoey yells back between spasms.

ZOEY

I'll be okay--

(vomit)

Keep engine running--

(vomit)

Have to get north as soon as--

(vomit)

Possible.

Tony starts gagging repeatedly.

TONY
Oh, no, it's gonna come up.

Hold on Eli's expression: he's completely over the trip.

TONY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I stopped it. No, I didn't. Wait I did. I didn't! I can taste it on my tonsils.

48 INT. ABEER'S CAR - NIGHT

48

Abeer is driving. The blue and red dots are moving down the highway. He is starting to look tired.

ABEER
Where are you going, Tony Wallace?

The red dot pauses.

ABEER (CONT'D)
They're stopped again? Is this thing broken?

He whacks the side of his phone.

ABEER (CONT'D)
Stupid technology.

He zooms in a little to see the name of the city on the map: Coalinga.

ABEER (CONT'D)
If this is actually right, I'll catch them in no time. But why are you stopping so much?

49 INT. HARV'S CAR - NIGHT

49

Zoey vomits in a new location.

CHYRON: Near Coalinga, CA.

ELI
What are the odds of picking up Old Faithful? Unbelievable. I hope you're happy.

TONY
Oh, totally.

He turns and raises his eyebrows quickly at Eli.

TONY (CONT'D)
So...you or me?

ELI
Don't even think about it.

TONY
Have you never seen a single movie?
Put people on a road trip,
someone's gonna fall in love! Does
she go for you or me?

Eli is nearly asleep.

ELI
She has to get north so urgently,
but won't tell us why. My connie
senses are tingling...I have to
figure out what she needs us for.

Zoey hops in the backseat and buckles up.

ZOEY
On the road again!

Eli tries to key the ignition. He misses. Then misses again.

TONY
Woah. You look tired, bro. Want me
to drive?

ELI
How long have I been going?

TONY
Including traffic, five hours.

ELI
Not a bad idea. Thanks, brother-
mine.

He tosses the keys to Tony.

50

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

50

Outside the gas station, Frank approaches the patrolman who talked with Eli.

FRANK
 Evening, officer. Detective
 Franklin, LAPD. You see a car like
 this today?

Frank holds up a photo of himself and Harvey in front of
 Harv's car.

PATROLMAN
 Matter of fact, I did. And you'll
 never guess who was driving it.
 Milo Vent, Venti, Vent-uh-mill-e-o.
 You know, I started watching "This
 Is Us" cause of my wife, but now
 I'm the obsessed one! And that
 actor? Nice guy, real personable.

FRANK
 Did you notice anything about him
 or the car?

PATROLMAN
 He had a problem with his trunk--I
 offered to fix it for free, but he
 wouldn't let me near it. A lot of
 these Hollywood types are jerks,
 but not Mister V. He's a real stand-
 up guy.

FRANK
 He keep north on the five?

PATROLMAN
 I think so. If you catch up to him,
 promise you'll nab an autograph!

Frank can't believe this guy.

FRANK
 Sure thing.

He walks off and checks his analog watch. The time is 1:14am.

51 INT. ABEER'S CAR - NIGHT

51

Abeer checks his smartwatch: 2:03am. He looks exhausted.

He checks the tracker app--the red dot maintains a consistent
 lead, appearing just south of Los Banos, CA.

ABEER

Why won't you take a break? You must be exhausted. And your leather jacket must be making you sleepy.

He nods off for a second then BOLTS upright.

ABEER (CONT'D)

How are you staying awake??

52 EXT. HARV'S CAR - NIGHT 52

The car bumps down a dirt road.

CHYRON: Near Los Banos, California.

53 INT. HARV'S CAR - NIGHT 53

Eli sleeps in the passenger seat. Zoey's out in the back.

Tony grips the steering wheel, struggling to keep awake. He's bleary-eyed and sleep-drunk. He shakes his head to wake up. He nods then snaps up. He sees something in the road and SLAMS THE BRAKES.

Reveal: a single rubber boot slumps in the road.

Zoey vomits herself awake.

ZOEY

Wuh happun?

TONY

Nobunny move.

Eli wakes up.

ELI

What is it?

TONY

Somming out there.

Zoey looks around.

ZOEY

What do you see?

Tony's dopey face slowly nods at the boot.

TONY

It's a...wuh za word...izza bear.
Thaz a bear inna road.

ELI

Oh, no, it's Loopy Tony. I'd better
take over.

ZOEY

Shouldn't we take a break?

ELI

No breaks. We can still make it
tonight.

ZOEY

If we don't get some real sleep,
we're not gonna arrive anywhere.

She opens a giant map.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

There's a town close by. We can
grab a hotel.

ELI

How will you pay for your room?

ZOEY

Two websites?

ELI

Unbelievable. Fine. If only for a
break from you lunatics. But we
leave first thing.

Eli looks over at his brother, who is drunkenly staring down
the "bear." Eli turns off the ignition and takes the keys.

ELI (CONT'D)

Okay, buddy, you're gonna sleep on
this side while we find you a
hotel, okay?

TONY

Iz zat a bear-free hotel?

ELI

Completely bear-free.

TONY

Okay. I go sleep now.

54 EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

54

Eli walks out of the hotel office and tosses a key to Zoey.

ELI

Bad luck, they're doing maintenance
on their phone system.

ZOEY

I'll borrow a stranger's cell
tomorrow.

She walks towards her room.

Tony is aware and waiting near the car. When Zoey's room door closes, he opens the trunk and begins pulling the duffle.

ELI

What are you doing?

TONY

Bringing Uncle Harv.

ELI

He's not sleeping with us!

TONY

We can't leave him in the car. What
if a cop drives by? They have crime-
sniffing dogs now.

ELI

They smell drugs, not crime. Fine.

TONY

Lifting heavy things is good
practice for the hardware store.

ELI

Shut up and get the legs.

Tony grabs the bag. They struggle towards the room carrying the cadaver.

55 INT. ABEER'S CAR - NIGHT

55

Abeer drives past the hotel. He sees the boys.

ABEER

With Tony, just like Kevin deduced.

The bag catches his eye.

ABEER (CONT'D)

My money!

The brothers enter their room. The door closes.

ABEER (CONT'D)

Yeah, get some good sleep, Eli.
Kevin's coming for you.

Abeer parks around the corner and types "illegal gun sale Los Banos" in his laptop.

A website pops up with a weird-looking guy and the words "normal guy's 'legal' gun sales." Abeer punches the number into his phone.

56 INT. ALLIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

56

A tough-as-nails, retired police chief lifts the ringing flip phone to her ear. Her name is ALISON "ALLIE" SINGH (65).

She answers the phone, all business.

ALLIE

Allie Singh, president of the Los Angeles Retired Fire and Police Association.

FRANK

Allie, it's Frank.

ALLIE

Frank! We missed you and Harv at the meeting last night. Everything okay?

FRANK

That's why I'm calling. Think we can mobilize the network?

ALLIE

Anything for you; how 'bout an APB too?

FRANK

No official crime yet, but there's something in my gut. I think Harv's nephews offed him and are heading for the Canadian border.

ALLIE

Why Canada?

FRANK
Working on it.

ALLIE
Anything for Harv. Send me the
details, and I'll raise the
network. What's your next step?

Frank pronounces his plan importantly.

FRANK
Round up the usual suspects.

57 INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT 57

QUICK CUTS:

- Frank's hands grab gummy worms.
- Filling up a styrofoam coffee cup.
- Putting gummy worms back.
- Grabbing pretzels.
- Grabbing chewing gum.
- Grabbing gummy worms again.

58 INT. FRANK'S CAR - NIGHT 58

Frank is parked comfortably in the driver's seat, surrounded by snacks.

FRANK
Nothing beats an old-fashioned
stakeout.

He has a great view of the lonely highway. He turns towards the snacks.

FRANK (CONT'D)
All right, who's first?

59 INT. TRASH SHACK - NIGHT 59

Abeer enters the creepy shed tentatively.

He has more reason to be afraid when he sees who's waiting: a GUY in a gas mask with a smiley face on it and weirdly mismatched clothing, holding an AK-47 and wearing horribly tacky lobster sandals.

The gun dealer is woefully disorganized, more hoarder than lord of war: there's as much firepower strewn around the room as garbage. Despite this, the dealer sits on the ugliest throne of all time. The space is illuminated by red and purple lights.

Abeer is so far out of his depth he can barely whisper.

ABEER

Um. I called ahead, mister...

GUY

Call me "Guy."

ABEER

Keep it anonymous, right.

GUY

No, my name's Guy. Remove your shoes to do business with Guy.

Abeer takes his boots off. Guy looks disdainfully at Abeer's socks, and his demeanor changes.

GUY (CONT'D)

Gray socks? Tasteless, gray socks??
You aren't fit to do business with
Guy. There's the door.

As Guy stands, he sees something behind Abeer. He pulls off his gas mask and admires the car.

Abeer leans over to grab his shoes, but Guy extends his arm to stop him.

GUY (CONT'D)

Tesla.

Covetousness rises in Guy's eyes.

GUY (CONT'D)

On second thought, I will let you
do business with me.

Guy kicks aside the trash to find a wayward pistol. It's a gummed-up, pock-marked piece of metal that hasn't been cleaned since the nine millimeter's invention in 1901.

GUY (CONT'D)

Ah, here we are. What will you pay for this magnificent, fire-spitting hand-cannon?

ABEER

I'll make it worth your while: I'll give you an entire Bitcoin for it.

GUY

You think I trust those electro-tronic pesos? I want two hundo--in cash!

ABEER

I don't have money on me.

Slow push in on the dealer. Tight on his AK.

GUY

I'll just take you to an ATM then.

Tension breaks. Abeer leans to grab his shoes again. A syrupy smile covers Guy's face.

GUY (CONT'D)

You can leave the boots.

60

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

60

Eli and Tony share a bed.

TONY

If he has to be in the room with us, he shouldn't be on the ground, that's all I'm saying.

ELI

Uh-huh.

The brothers are cramped on the small twin mattress.

ELI (CONT'D)

Just stay on your side, will you?

Harvey's corpse lies comfortably in the other bed.

TIGHT ON: Eli's face as Tony's pencil SCRATCHES LOUDLY.

ELI (CONT'D)

Do you have to do that now?

TONY
Just two more lines.

Scratch. Scratch. Scraaaaatch.

Tony rolls closer to his brother, nearly asleep already.

TONY (CONT'D)
Good night, brother-mine.

Eli is miserable with Tony against him. Triple split-screen with Zoey sprawled like a starfish, Harvey corpse-straight, and Eli sleeplessly angry.

61 INT. ABEER'S CAR - NIGHT

61

With Abeer in the driver's seat and Guy as passenger, the Tesla trails slowly down a dirt road.

ABEER
I'm not seeing an ATM.

GUY
Here's good enough.

Guy points the gross gun; Abeer stops the car.

GUY (CONT'D)
Sorry, my friend, but it's get-out time. I need wheels for a shipment in Arbuckle tomorrow night.

Abeer gets out.

ABEER
You're making a mistake. I could give you forty-thousand-dollars in crypto. You can keep the gun!

Guy shouts as he drives away.

GUY
Seems to me, I prefer your hundred-thousand-dollar car, but a deal's a deal.

He tosses the janky pistol onto the desert floor.

Abeer grabs the gun and tries to shoot at the escaping car. Nothing happens.

ABEER
How do you turn off the safety?

He struggles with it for a minute.

ABEER (CONT'D)

Got it!

He looks up and points the pistol. His car is insanely far.

Abeer clicks the safety on, sighs, and starts walking.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

62 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

62

Eli's eyes are 100% open--not a wink of sleep. Tony's entwined around him. Eli tries to move his pinned arms unsuccessfully.

Zoey WHACKS the door.

ZOEY

(cheerily)

Rise and shine, happy traveling companions!

Tony stirs without opening his eyes.

TONY

(sleepily)

Whozzat?

ZOEY

Looks like we all slept in. I'm gonna grab coffee then we can hit the road.

She pounds the door once more for good measure.

Eli looks annoyed at Zoey's loud voice. He tries to wriggle out of Tony's python-ish arm.

Zoey's footsteps trail away.

Eli frees an arm and pulls the blanket off, showing Tony's leg wrapping him like a tentacle.

Tony opens his eyes and slowly looks at Eli.

TONY

Oh good, you're up. We gotta move Harvey.

63

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

63

TIGHT ON: Abeer's bare feet looking tired and rough. He's a wreck.

As he struggles into the parking lot, he stops and looks around. Harv's car is nowhere to be seen.

ABEER

Gone? No.

He pulls up his phone tracking app. It shows the red dot far away to the north.

ABEER (CONT'D)

No, no, no!

He has a small tantrum. Then he sits in the shade.

He notices a HITCHHIKER smiling with a cardboard sign. A car stops, and he enters. The vehicle pulls away.

Abeer smiles--inspired.

64

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

64

Someone rummages in a dumpster. Abeer's hand STICKS UP with a sharpie.

ABEER

A-ha!

He sits on the edge of the dumpster and draws a sign on cardboard.

A harmless looking girl named BRADY (18) walks by.

BRADY

Slick aviators.

ABEER

Thank you.

BRADY

I lost a pair like that.

ABEER

These aren't them.

BRADY

I'm not so sure.

She pulls out a taser.

ABEER

I have a gun.

Brady crackles the taser an inch from the metal dumpster.

BRADY

You'll never get it out. Hand 'em over, glasses thief.

He does.

ABEER

They really are mine.

BRADY

I don't believe you, but just in case...we traded for them.

She tosses her eccentric rubber ducky glasses then leaves.

BRADY (CONT'D)

Follow me and I call the cops.

65 INT. FRANK'S CAR - DAY 65

The dashboard's covered in snack wrappers. Just outside, Harv's car ZOOMS BY with loud music blasting.

Frank snores peacefully.

66 EXT. HARV'S CAR - DAY 66

Loud music continues as the vehicle zips down the highway.

TONY (V.O.)

This is my favorite part!

67 INT. HARV'S CAR - DAY 67

Pan across: Tony's enthusiastic singing to the Turtles' "Elenore," Zoey singing heartily, Eli angrily silent.

CUT TO:

68 INT. HARV'S CAR - DAY 68

The car is stopped. In the background, Zoey talks to a STRANGER, who shakes their head and walks away.

CHYRON: Near Sacramento, CA.

Eli turns to the passenger seat.

ELI

I'm glad you're doing American Idol on the way to bury our uncle.

TONY

"Life's about the journey." Harv always said that. Well, he read it off a fortune cookie once. He'd want us to have fun.

Tony looks dreamily out the window.

TONY (CONT'D)

She's wonderful, don't you think?

Zoey looks up in the distance and waves at the brothers. Eli fake-smiles and waves back.

ELI

(pretends he's talking to her)

Oh yeah, hey, everything is awesome, so glad you're with us.

(to Tony)

Zoey's definitely hiding something.

She hops in.

ZOEY

Wow. Strangers really won't let you borrow their phone. Why don't you guys have them again?

TONY

It's a funny story, actually--

ELI

Tony!

Eli shoots a withering look at his brother.

ELI (CONT'D)

The rest of the ride, let's keep the questions to a minimum.

TONY

Can you tell me more about how you wanna help aspiring comics?

ZOEY

Not just comics--I want to build a launchpad where up-and-comers sing and monologue and do their best stuff for a shot at their fortune. Imagine the hottest place for scouts and agents, where everyone gets repped. And you'll never guess the best part.

ELI

Vomit medication on the house?

ZOEY

I'll be funded by successful actors who made it already and are grateful but still remember how it hurt to be young and hungry.

TONY

Like me.

ZOEY

Just like. Didn't you have a joke you were gonna tell?

TONY

That's right! So there was this bunny rabbit...

A fun driving MONTAGE BEGINS:

- | | | |
|----|--|----|
| 69 | INT. HARV'S CAR - DAY | 69 |
| | The vehicle turns off the highway near a sign announcing the town of Williams. | |
| 70 | INT. STRANGER'S CAR 1 - DAY | 70 |
| | POV in backseat: Abeer stands haggardly on the roadside wearing duck glasses and holding a "north" sign. | |
| 71 | EXT. FRANK'S CAR - DAY | 71 |
| | Detective Frank investigates: he interviews people, looks at tracks, and studies vomit in the bushes. | |

72 INT. STRANGER'S CAR 2 - DAY 72

Abeer is having a horrible time hitchhiking; sitting between two oversized adult twins. It's a fun contrast between Abeer's cramped experience and the broad, sweeping views outside Harv's car.

73 EXT. HARV'S CAR - DAY 73

The vehicle drives through a gorgeous vista where the desert meets the mountains west of Williams, California.

74 INT. STRANGER'S CAR 3 - DAY 74

A HUGE DOG paces back and forth over Abeer.

75 EXT. HARV'S CAR - DAY 75

The car winds up a narrow but beautiful mountain road on Highway 20.

76 INT. STRANGER'S CAR 4 - DAY 76

Abeer's eyes show pain as he sits beside a screaming baby. It throws food on Abeer's face.

77 EXT. HARV'S CAR - DAY 77

Harv's car traces the shores of the shimmering and enticing Clear Lake.

END MONTAGE.

78 INT. VEHICLE - DAY 78

Abeer sits in the passenger seat of a new vehicle.

ABEER

That's right, the name's Kevin.

Reveal the driver: IT'S FRANK!

FRANK

Call me Frank.

Frank's phone rings. He picks up.

ALLIE (O.S.)
Frank, just got off with border
patrol. If they try to cross to
Canada in Blaine, we'll nab 'em.

FRANK
Thanks, Allie.

ALLIE (O.S.)
Catch you later.

Abeer puts it together.

ABEER
You're a policeman?

FRANK
Detective. Retired.

ABEER
You know, I'm a gun aficionado
myself.

FRANK
That right? Then you can understand
how stupid it is they're using tiny
nines now, but I was always partial
to a ten or a thirty-eight myself.

ABEER
What...what do those numbers mean?

FRANK
Well, Mister Gun Aficionado, nine
and ten millimeters and point-three-
eight inches indicate different
sized bullets.

Abeer's eyes go wide.

ABEER
Bullets. You need bullets too! Drop
me here.

The vehicle stops. Abeer hops out.

FRANK
Weird kid.

Frank drives off.

79

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - DAY

79

Abeer has the phone to his ear.

A wiry-but-energetic old-timer named YIP (70s) answers the phone in an outdoor store.

YIP

Yip's Sporting Goods, Yip speaking!

ABEER

Hi Yip, my name is Kevin--

YIP

--Hi Kevin!

This throws Abeer off.

ABEER

...Hello. I was wondering how to purchase ammunition for my legal handgun.

YIP

Shucks, that's easy, Kev, what you do is waltz yourself into Yip's Sporting Goods, present a valid ID, California or military--say, were you in the service, Kev?

ABEER

That's not in Kevin's backstory.

YIP

Not a problem, just bring in your state ID--of course if it says "Federal limits apply," you gotta present another form, including birth certificate or passport and such. If you've purchased a handgun in California, you're already in the Automated Firing System, so you can get your background check in minutes.

ABEER

Background check? For ammo?

YIP

Yep, background check. Now, have you ever bought a firearm in California or did you purchase your handgun out of state?

ABEER
...Out of state.

YIP
That gets a bit trickier, but not much. You just have to pay a nineteen dollar fee. Now, that serves two purposes: it registers you in our system, and does a background check. Since you're not in AFS yet, the check could take a few days.

ABEER
To buy bullets??

YIP
That's the state we live in: good old California! And then, of course, the ammunition would have to be in stock. What kinda round you looking for?

Abeer pulls out the pistol and reads the lettering on the side.

ABEER
Nine...millimeter.

Yip laughs.

YIP
Why didn't you say so? That's the commonest round there is.

ABEER
So I can get it?

YIP
It's the commonest, so it sells out as soon as I get it. Good luck finding nines in California. It's worth its weight in gold.

ABEER
Any suggestions?

YIP
Befriend a prepper!

Abeer sighs and hangs up the phone and starts walking wearily.

ABEER

Why is everyone in the world
keeping me from being Kevin?

Long shot of his Charlie Brown shuffle.

ABEER (V.O.)

I hate California.

80 INT. HARVEY'S CAR - DAY 80

Tony naps. Zoey reads a magazine with ear protection in. Eli is deep in thought with eyes troubled by guilt.

81 INT. HARV'S APARTMENT - DAY 81

Eli does something on the computer. Harv bursts in.

HARVEY

Really, Eli? My pension check?

ELI

It's seed money. I'll double it.

Harvey's eyes cut through the lie.

HARVEY

No, Eli, you won't. You're no good.

ELI

Not your definition of good.

82 INT. HARV'S CAR - DAY 82

Eli looks bitter.

ELI

(to himself)

Name a higher good than helping
myself. I'll wait.

Zoey hears the words and looks up subtly with eyes of pity.

83 INT. FRANK'S CAR - DAY 83

Generic I-5 deserts pass outside the window. The phone rings. It's Allie. Frank picks up.

ALLIE

One of my guys saw a car like
Harv's near a gas station in
Williams.

FRANK

Williams? They turned off the Five?

ALLIE

Still think they're going to
Canada?

84 EXT. HIGHWAY 20 - DAY

84

Harv's car takes the ramp from Highway 20 to the open country
of Highway 101 northbound. A sign shows 132 miles to Fortuna.

ZOEY (V.O.)

Shouldn't we stop for gas?

ELI (V.O.)

Almost there, no need.

ZOEY (V.O.)

We both want to get there, but I
think it would be wise.

ELI (V.O.)

No need.

TONY (V.O.)

I don't like when mommy and daddy
are fighting.

ELI (V.O.)

You're not funny.

ZOEY (V.O.)

That's no way to talk to a guy
who'll tell the funniest joke ever.

85 EXT. AGRICULTURAL FIELDS - DAY

85

Abeer walks across a canal at twilight. An old transient
named HOBO CLAY looks up from the gully.

HOBO CLAY

Psst.

Abeer jumps back with a scream.

ABEER
What do you want?

HOBO CLAY
Business transaction, man.

Clay wears an old backpack over a threadbare red DRUM MAJOR JACKET.

ABEER
Unless you have a car in that backpack, I'll pass.

HOBO CLAY
I can pay, and pay well too!

ABEER
Oh yeah, how will you do that?

HOBO CLAY
Three words, two syllables: ma-gic-beans.

ABEER
No, thank you, sir. I'm not interested in your beans.

Clay jumps up and slides an arm on Abeer's shoulder.

HOBO CLAY
You ain't listening to what I'm telling you. I said these are magic beans.

Clay brings his hand to Abeer's face and slowly reveals the contents: THREE GLISTENINGLY SACRED NINE-MILLIMETER ROUNDS.

Abeer's eyes dilate.

ABEER
What will you take for them?

Clay examines Abeer's outfit.

HOBO CLAY
That's a nice jacket you got there.

86 EXT. HIGHWAY 101 - REDWOODS - DAY

86

Establishing shot: Harv's car winds past majestic sequoias spotted in gold light.

CHYRON: Near Leggett, CA.

The passengers speak in VO.

TONY (V.O.)
Guys, I gotta visit the wizard of
whiz.

ELI (V.O.)
We stopped three minutes ago.

TONY (V.O.)
I didn't have to go then.

ELI (V.O.)
The next vomit stop is in eleven
minutes.

TONY (V.O.)
Crisis averted, I found a bottle!

ELI (V.O.)
Okay, we're stopping!

TONY (V.O.)
If you say so. I don't mind the
bottle.

They roll up near a rest stop with redwood sculptures.

TONY (V.O.)
Ooh, chainsaw art!

The car pulls into the rest stop. Tony runs out.

87 INT. REST STOP - RESTROOM - DAY

87

Tony washes at the sink. A guy dressed like a typical road trip dad with sunscreen-nose, floppy hat, and socks-sandals approaches and washes his hands. He's SCOTT (45).

TONY
You hear about the iceberg that got
lasik? The surgery went great, but
his eyes would water after. Get it,
ice, water?

The dad breaks out into a reedy but loud laugh then looks confused.

SCOTT
Wait, I don't get it.

He waffles again.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Oh wait, yes I do!

He laughs.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Wait, no I don't. Why's that funny?

Tony sees himself in the mirror, maybe for the first time.

TONY
(realizing)
It's...not.

88 EXT. REST STOP - DAY

88

Tony comes out of the bathroom a little dazed. He sees Zoey and Eli admiring a sculpted redwood bear. They look good together. A benevolent smile crosses Tony's face.

A commotion rises behind him. Scott and his wife DEANNA search for something frantically.

SCOTT
Where are you?

Tony looks over, curiosity awoken. Harv's car starts moving, HEADING STRAIGHT FOR TONY!

Scott shouts; Tony doesn't see it. Eli notices but freezes.

ELI
I can't save him.

Zoey notices.

ZOEY
Move!

Tony jumps in the nick of time. As the vehicle passes, he looks over: NO ONE IS DRIVING!

TONY
I'm gonna get blamed for this.

89 INT. HARV'S CAR - DAY

89

JIMMY (8), a bowl cut blonde with mischievous grin and freckles, drives Harv's car. Eyes peer just above the wheel.

Jimmy laughs gleefully and accelerates.

90

INT. SCOTT'S CAR - DAY

90

Scott swerves around the narrow tree-lined roads. Eli, Tony, and Zoey are smushed in the backseat.

Eli's in shock.

ELI
I couldn't help.

TONY
It's not your fault.

ZOEY
We're going south. That's the wrong direction.

SCOTT
We're so sorry. I can't believe he stole another car!

TONY
He's done this before?

ZOEY
Could I borrow one of your phones?

DEANNA
Of course.

She hands hers back. Zoey dials a number. It just rings.

Scott ignores the exchange.

SCOTT
The crazy part is he doesn't care about cars. He'll drive a few miles then pull over and go through the trunk. Has a whole collection of lug wrenches.

Eli and Tony flash a worried look to each other.

ZOEY
No one picked up. I'll try again.

SCOTT
He's not a normal kid.

DEANNA
Scott!

Scott gestures to the road ahead.

SCOTT
Where's the lie?

91 EXT. FORESTY ROAD - DAY 91

Harv's car stops on the empty road. Jimmy hits the trunk unlock button and it pops open.

Jimmy hops out and moves around the side. The moment when he reaches the trunk, Scott GRABS HIM.

SCOTT
No! We do not commit grand theft auto, mister!

Scott carts Jimmy to their car. Zoey hands the phone back to Deanna and comes over. Eli slams the trunk just in time.

The parents put Jimmy in the car and drive off.

Tony walks up. Eli turns with angry eyes.

ELI
We just had to stop.

Tony points.

TONY
Look, we're almost there.

The car is parked in front of a sign that says, "now entering Humboldt County."

It's getting darker.

92 EXT. INTERSTATE 5 - NIGHT 92

Frank's car turns off the highway at a sign for "Williams."

93 INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT 93

Frank approaches the counter and flashes his badge. The attendant, ZATCH (25), has shaggy hair, sharp eyes, and a snarky personality.

FRANK
I need to see your cameras.

ZATCH
That badge says "retired."

FRANK
Listen here,
(reading name tag)
...Zack.

ZATCH
It's Zatch, with a hard "chuh."

FRANK
(sarcastic)
What, is that short for Zatchary?

ZATCH
(no sarcasm)
Yes.

FRANK
Oh.

Frank needs a new tactic. He slides over a hundred dollar bill.

FRANK (CONT'D)
How 'bout a famous Franklin Thank-
You Card, Zatchary?

The kid crumples the bill into his cargo pocket.

ZATCH
This way to the security closet.

94 INT. SECURITY CLOSET - NIGHT

94

A black and white, high angle perspective covers the highway; vehicles zoom at triple speed. Harv's car pulls into view.

FRANK (O.S.)
Stop. Play it from there.

The car halts hastily (the tape has no audio). Zoey jumps out and vomits. Tony isn't far behind; he throws up too.

ZATCH
Oh yeah, these guys.

Frank leans over, studying the tape.

Zoey wipes her mouth then looks over at Tony throwing up. This makes her vomit again.

Tony looks at her and has to take his turn. They alternate back and forth like this.

ZATCH (CONT'D)

They went on like that for fourteen minutes.

On the tape, Eli goes to the trunk, pulls out an old lawn chair, unfolds a newspaper, and sits down for a nice read.

FRANK

Can we jump forward?

Zatch clicks a command and the tape speeds forward. Tony and Zoey get into the car shakily. Eli shifts the body bag to wedge the chair in.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Stop the tape.

Zatch obeys.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Can you zoom in?

ZATCH

I can try. For another hundred.

FRANK

That looks like the body of my partner, and if he's dead, someone's gonna pay. I think it's in everyone's best interest for you not to make me mad.

Zatch leans into the machine, scared.

ZATCH

Enhance.

It's a VHS. Clearly it won't "enhance."

FRANK

Never mind. Make a copy.

Zatch scrambles to obey.

Frank takes out his pad and chews on the pencil.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Now why would they turn off the highway at Williams...

Frank sees a brochure for Humboldt County on the desk. He picks it up.

FRANK (CONT'D)
What's this?

ZATCH
I'm thinking of taking my
girlfriend. I know what you're
thinking, but it's not for the pot--

FRANK
(to himself)
But why go to Humboldt?

ZATCH
--There's a surprising amount of
culture and history there.

Frank isn't listening. His eyes widen with a realization.

FRANK
Harv's cabin. They're going to...

PUSH IN TIGHT as Frank's eyes narrow.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Fortuna.

CUT: Frank rushes out on the phone.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Allie, call me. It's more than a
hunch now. I may need backup.

SMASH CUT: Frank's car peels away.

SUPER WIDE: Frank's rickety vehicle barely goes 15 mph.

95 EXT. HARV'S CAR - NIGHT

95

Sweeping view of the redwood forests. The car sputters down a
narrow redwood-lined road. It's twilight.

ELI (V.O.)
What now??

TONY (V.O.)
(cheerful)
Is this cause you didn't stop for
gas like Zoey suggested?

96

EXT. HARV'S CAR - DAY

96

The car rolls to a stop and Eli jumps out, livid, illuminated by headlights.

CHYRON: North of Benbow, California.

ELI

How is a ten-hour drive taking
three days?!

Zoey joins him.

ELI (CONT'D)

Don't you say a word. I was making
time up from Jimmy's joyride.

ZOEY

It's fine. Do you have a gas can?

ELI

Probably.

ZOEY

I can walk and bring back gas.

ELI

With what money?

ZOEY

Okay, if you don't trust me, then
why don't you go get it.

ELI

In the morning I will.

ZOEY

What if I told you I have to arrive
urgently because...my grandmother
is dying?

ELI

I'm not risking my skin against who-
knows-what in the dark.

ZOEY

Do you care about anybody but
yourself?

ELI

Never saw the ROI in it.

ZOEY

That's it. I'm walking.

ELI
You're going fifty miles on foot?

ZOEY
Someone has to do something!

Zoey grabs her jacket and stomps into the dark.

We hear a cacophony of CRASHING ROCKS and the snap of tendons. Zoey limps past Eli.

ELI
Probably take pressure off that ankle.

ZOEY
Shut up.

97 EXT. HIGHWAY 20 - NIGHT 97

Frank's car is stopped on the roadside. Smoke pours from the hood. Frank fans it with a rag.

FRANK
Come on, you old beauty. Hold on another couple hundred miles. For Harv.

98 EXT. FIRE ROAD - NIGHT 98

Abeer tries to sleep while he shivers miserably under the ridiculous red jacket from Hobo Clay.

99 EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT 99

Zoey sits as Eli wraps her ankle in an ACE bandage. A vehicle first aid kit is open on the ground.

A small fire crackles in the foreground. Tony is out cold in a sleeping bag.

ZOEY
Thanks, doc.

ELI
Avoiding a lawsuit.

Zoey shifts.

ZOEY
Wish I hadn't blown my top.

Eli ties off the bandage.

ELI

I think you were telling the truth about your grandma. So, sorry.

ZOEY

Thanks. Overlooking the skepticism, I appreciate it.

He leans back and considers the stars.

ELI

Can I tell you something?

ZOEY

Let's see.

ELI

Wanna know why you haven't done it yet, the talent-launchpad thing?

ZOEY

I know why. I just need a push.

ELI

That's not it. The delta between what you want and pursuing it is fear, always.

ZOEY

Where's this new you coming from?

ELI

I was a life coach once. Don't laugh. So what's your biggest fear?

ZoeY studies the treetops and ponders.

ZOEY

In my 20s, I tried to be an actress. I wish just one person would have said, "this industry is rough, but I'm here for you" or "you may not get this part, but you have what it takes." It was always, "you're not the right look" or "can you lose the accent?" I know it's not their job to guard my heart, but why not? Not one of them ever even said I'm beautiful.

(MORE)

ZOEY (CONT'D)

I don't mean on the outside, I mean they treated me like I wasn't worth anything. Someone needs to be a cheerleader for the newcomers.

ELI

What's stopping you?

ZOEY

I'm afraid that I'm not the right person to do it...maybe I'm not worth anything. How do I fix that?

ELI

I have no idea.

ZOEY

You're a great life coach.

ELI

Maybe knowing can help.

The cozy fire crackles.

ZOEY

What about your dreams; what do you want?

ELI

I don't really believe in those questions for myself.

Eli studies the stars.

ELI (CONT'D)

But if I dreamed one thing, it's that the old me isn't who I am forever.

ZOEY

What's the old guy's routine?

ELI

He expects people to disappoint, and he's always right. So he runs. Whenever he senses something will hurt or will have consequences, he's like, "see ya never."

ZOEY

Huh.

ELI

What?

ZOEY

I'm not good at sage advice or whatever. But, instead of escaping, maybe true freedom means running to relationship, mess and all.

Zoey reaches for Eli's hand. He pulls back. We see the hurt in her eyes and the shame in his. Tony rolls over.

TONY

(mumbling asleep)
Uncle Harvey's in the trunk.

Wide shot of stars over the rising trees.

ZOEY (V.O.)

What was that?

ELI (V.O.)

Nothing. We should all go to sleep.

FADE TO BLACK.

100

EXT. SMALL TOWN - DAY

100

Eli walks down quiet streets nestled under branches of massive redwoods, carrying a red gas can.

He approaches a filling station. Two interchangeable hitchhiker stoners, RODNEY and JADE, sit outside the convenience store.

RODNEY

It's true, I am trying to go to Fortuna.

JADE

What do think people go there for?

RODNEY

I don't know. Probably for...tuna.

They riff on "Fortuna" and "tuna" for a while, thinking it's a brilliant conversation.

JADE

Tuna?

RODNEY

One, two, three, four...tuna.

JADE

For...tuna.

RODNEY

Tuna.

JADE

Woah. Fish are rad. I, too, will
seek my fortune in Fortuna.

Eli's face shows disbelief as he enters the store. He approaches the clearly baked cashier named RIVERDANCE who could be triplets with the two stoners.

ELI

Where am I, the Twilight Zone?

No response from Riverdance.

ELI (CONT'D)

Whatever.

He plunks down a bill.

ELI (CONT'D)

Twenty on Pump Three.

Since there's no answer, Eli reaches over and flips the pump on. Conflicting ideas show on his face...he slips the 20 back in his pocket and exits.

Hold on Riverdance.

The door slowly closes. Eli pumps gas in the background.

Still no response from the cashier.

Eli lifts his can and walks away.

After waaay too long, the girl answers:

RIVERDANCE

(finally)

You're in Garberville, sir.

101 EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

101

Eli approaches Harvey's car, sensing something's wrong--he doesn't see anyone.

ELI

Guys?

He rushes to the trunk. Zoey STARES AT HARV'S BODY.

ELI (CONT'D)
I can explain this.

ZOEY
Get away from me.

Tony walks up carrying his sleeping bag.

TONY
Oh good, you found Harvey.

ZOEY
Who are you people??

ELI
It's okay. Settle down.

TONY
We came home and found him dead.

ZOEY
Who is he?

TONY
Our uncle.

ZOEY
What's he doing in your car? Has he
been there the whole time?

ELI
He died, and we wanted to bury him
at the family cabin up north.

TONY
Just off Old Carson Road near
Fortuna.

Eli gives his brother his classic "shut up" look.

ELI
So you can understand why I didn't
want to bring you. It would look
weird to a stranger.

ZOEY
I need to process this.

She limps off to the side.

TONY
You're weirdly calm right now.

ELI
She won't turn us in. She needs us
to see her dying grandmother.

TONY
What about after?

ELI
We'll be long gone.

Zoey comes back.

ZOEY
Seeing my grandma is more important
than whatever's going on here. I
won't say anything.

Eli nods. Zoey goes to the car and shuts herself in.

ELI
I still think there's something
she's not telling us.

TONY
Is everything a con, though?

ELI
Yes.

TONY
Well, there's not much time to
figure her out. Only four vomit
stops to Fortuna.

102 EXT. FIRE ROAD - DAY

102

Abeer wills himself along the deserted road. He's shoeless. Hobo Clay's red jacket looks ridiculous over the tank top. He is miserable, and the sun punishes him mercilessly.

He shields his eyes and reluctantly puts on the duck glasses.

In the distance, coming out of the haze beautifully distorted by heat waves, is a Tesla Model X. Alternate cuts between the car and Abeer looking at it.

INTERCUT: Inside Abeer's car, Guy drives. He's rocking out to loud music. Lights pulse inside like a party.

INTERCUT: Abeer stands in the middle of the road.

INTERCUT: Guy swigs an energy drink. He sees Abeer at the last minute.

GUY
Woah, Nelly!

The car STOPS AN INCH from Abeer's shin. Guy leans out.

GUY (CONT'D)
What are you doing in the road? I
could have hit you!

ABEER
I want my car back!

GUY
What car?

ABEER
The car you are literally driving
right now.

Guy recognizes him.

GUY
Wait a second. You're that little
guy from the other night. Good to
see you, man! I'm in high spirits
cause I just picked up a big order
in--

ABEER
In Arbuckle, I know.

GUY
That's right. Hey, you need a lift
somewhere?

Abeer pulls out his gun.

ABEER
Get out of the car.

GUY
You're not shooting anyone without
bullets.

Abeer holds up one of his new brass rounds.

GUY (CONT'D)
You found ammo.

ABEER
I found ammo.

Guy gets out.

GUY
Doesn't it lack respect to carjack
a guy with his own product?

ABEER
It's my car!

GUY
You sure like to live in the past,
don't you?

ABEER
I will be taking your cell phone
and shoes.

GUY
Not the lobsties!

ABEER
Yes. The lobsties.

Guy takes them off and throws them in the car. Abeer enters.
He dials 911 on Guy's phone.

ABEER (CONT'D)
Hi, there's an illegal arms dealer
stranded on Wichita Road.

He tosses the phone and a case of rifles onto the desert
floor.

ABEER (CONT'D)
Good luck; I hope to never see you
again.

Abeer drives off.

Guy sits on the crate.

GUY
Well, that hurts my feelings.

103 EXT. HIGHWAY 20 - DAY

103

Frank changes a flat.

FRANK
I do not need this right now!

104 INT. ABEER'S CAR - DAY 104

In Hobo Clay's red coat and the horrible lobster sandals, Abeer is the opposite of a super spy, but the look strangely works on him.

He checks the tracking app.

ABEER

Four hours behind. Come on, Kevin, you can catch up. Time to hit warp speed.

105 EXT. ABEER'S CAR - DAY 105

The Tesla accelerates noiselessly.

106 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY 106

Establishing shot: passing a sign for Fortuna.

107 EXT. FORTUNA - DAY 107

Harv's car is stopped in front of an elderly care center. Zoey gets out and leans back in the window.

ZOEY

(to Tony)

I really think you'll be great.
Don't give up on your dream.

TONY

I'm gonna dedicate the funniest
joke ever to you.

She smiles.

ZOEY

Buona fortuna.

Zoey turns her attention to Eli.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Good bye, Eli.

She waits for him to respond, but he says nothing.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Keep in touch.

Zoey gathers her things and walks away.

ELI
 (too soft for her to hear)
 Wait. You're beautiful.

108 INT. HARV'S CAR - DAY

108

Tony studies his long-faced brother.

TONY
 Shoulda asked her to help
 with...you know.

ELI
 Oh yeah, miss hitchhiker stranger,
 can you bury the uncle we got
 hopped up on Turkish flour and
 killed?

Tony inhales like he's about to say something important.

TONY
 So before I fell asleep, I was
 hearing you and Zoey at the
 campfire. You guys are good; I want
 you to know I concede her to you.

ELI
 Thanks, bud, but she's out of our
 lives.

Eli's eyes show regret.

TONY
 Well, if she were to come back in,
 just saying. I wouldn't mind if you
 got married and had eight mini-
 Eli's.

ELI
 Thanks, Tone. Hey, you got anything
 in that joke book to cheer me up?

TONY
 I don't really feel like it.

ELI
 Come on, just one.

Tony flips through a couple pages of his joke pad. Then a few more. He lands on the last page. He delivers it hesitantly.

TONY
 What's Harvey's favorite metal?

ELI

What?

TONY

Barium. As in, bury 'em. I know,
it's not funny.

Eli forces himself to smile a little.

ELI

No, it's...not bad. Kind of morbid,
but not bad.

He turns onto a dirt road.

ELI (CONT'D)

Let's take care of Uncle Harv.

109 INT. CARE FACILITY - DAY

109

Zoey rushes into a room where the colors are restrained: a care facility. She speaks to someone we don't see yet.

ZOEY

They called and said there wasn't
much time--I came as quick as I
could.

Reveal: Zoey's GRANDMOTHER MYRTLE (85). She's an adorable woman with a cheery and indomitable disposition.

MYRTLE

Oh dear. I've been trying to call.
It was a false alarm! But how sweet
of you to come, Zoey-dear.

Zoey sits on the bed and takes Myrtle's hands in hers.

MYRTLE (CONT'D)

How's the...

She mimics vomiting.

ZOEY

Same as always.

MYRTLE

I talked to the nurses who know
everything. Take half a child's
Dramamine. You'll be a new woman.

Zoey embraces her grandmother tightly.

ZOEY

I thought I wouldn't get to say
good-bye.

MYRTLE

I got a lot of years in me yet,
kiddo. The secret's ice cream.

110 EXT. HARV'S CABIN - DAY 110

Establishing shot: The cabin sits in a snug clearing
surrounded by an emerald forest.

A sound rings out: A SHOVEL REPEATEDLY DIGGING.

111 EXT. HARV'S CABIN - DAY 111

Tony pats down dirt with the shovel. Eli supervises with
hands on hips.

Tony fixes the shovel upright and stands, assuming the same
posture as his brother. They look at something on the ground.

ELI

How deep do they go in the movies?

TONY

Six feet.

ELI

How long did this take?

TONY

Six hours.

ELI

And how far did we get in that
time, approximately?

TONY

Eight inches.

ELI

So six feet would take...two days.
Honestly, I think it's fine like
that.

TONY

No one comes up here anyway.

ELI

Yeah man, it's probably fine.

Reveal: there's a burial rectangle; poking out of the fresh, dark dirt is HARV'S NOSE.

The brothers wipe their hands and walk to the car.

112 INT. CARE FACILITY - DAY

112

Zoey sits on the bed. She and Myrtle eat ice cream cones.

MYRTLE

I'm glad you came up. I've been wanting to give you something, but it's better in person. Let's talk about your ideas. Dreams aren't wine, you know, they don't improve on shelves.

ZOEY

I...got some advice on that lately. What if I don't have what it takes, Gram?

Myrtle takes Zoey's hand.

MYRTLE

Oh, but you do.

Zoey looks skeptical.

MYRTLE (CONT'D)

What?

ZOEY

I don't know. It's just that I'm thirty-five and no one has ever told me I'm beautiful, other than like you and mom. At this point, if a guy told me, I'm not sure I would even believe him. I want to be too mature to care, but it hurts, Gram.

MYRTLE

I know, dear, but hearing it won't change that. It's that you don't believe it. You have to know it for yourself: you're worth everything.

ZOEY

But how do you believe that about yourself?

Myrtle pulls a project from her nightstand: a picture album.

MYRTLE

I've made you a little something that might help. Once you know what you're worth, you can champion all those artists.

She hands the album and car keys to Zoey.

MYRTLE (CONT'D)

Take my car and get alone. This might do the trick, Zoey-dear.

113 INT. HARV'S CAR - DAY

113

The car moves down a dirt road. The brothers are in high spirits.

TONY

Bro. We actually did it!

ELI

Yeah, man. Proud of you, brother-mine. Maybe you do have the tenacity for this.

He hands Tony the yellow pad. Tony takes it with a smile.

They drive in the silence of the nice moment.

Tony pats himself down.

TONY

Uh.

He looks around his feet.

ELI

What is it?

TONY

Um.

Tony searches frantically, starting to freak out.

TONY (CONT'D)

It's not here.

ELI

What are you looking for?

TONY

Remember when you told me to leave my phone in LA two days ago?

(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)
I kinda didn't, and I think it
might have fallen in the hole.

A storm brews in Eli's eyes.

ELI
Tony, I have bad people after me
all the time. One of them could be
tracking us right now. Why would
you do that?

TONY
It's a twelve hundred dollar phone;
I'm not just gonna chuck away the
most expensive thing I own.

ELI
Maybe if you were the tiniest bit
responsible you wouldn't worry
about expenses like that.

TONY
We can't all have fancy hardware
store jobs, Eli.

Eli looks guilty.

TONY (CONT'D)
Eli? You do work at a hardware
store, right?

Eli shrugs.

TONY (CONT'D)
If we weren't getting you money to
set that up, what was the con for?

PUSH IN on Eli's face as he remembers.

114 INT. HARV'S CAR - NIGHT

114

The car is parked. Uncle Harv sits in the driver's seat; Eli
is beside him. Red and blue lights color a rainy windshield.

HARVEY
Saw your billboard.

ELI
(charmingly)
You arresting me?

Uncle Harvey shakes his head. Eli's playfulness doesn't work
on him.

Harvey isn't shouting; he's gravely serious.

HARVEY

This is the last straw, Eli. You know I wanted the best lives for you boys. I failed with you, but it's not too late for Tony. If you're in his life, it is. You gotta let him grow up good, which means you leaving for good. Here, I'll give you four bills.

He holds four hundred out. Bribery to abandon his brother. Eli looks wounded at the suggestion...but tempted too.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

I'll let you come for his birthday. I don't care how you spend it with him, but after that, you can't come back, ever. You're no good for anyone, bud.

Eli nods grimly. His face shows he agrees--this one's not a con. He can't stop himself from taking the cash.

115 INT. HARV'S CAR - DAY

115

Back in the present, Tony's question hangs in the air.

ELI

Plane ticket.

TONY

To where?

ELI

Not LA.

TONY

You were gonna leave me?

Eli's silence speaks volumes. Tony grabs his pad like a security blanket and writes.

ELI

I know you're not doing that right now.

TONY

Tension builds memorable comedy.

Eli can't believe it.

TONY (CONT'D)

Here it is; you're like Batman with
a D.

(off Eli's confusion)

You're BADman.

ELI

Can we be done with the dad jokes?

TONY

More like rad jokes!

ELI

STOP. Everything's not a punchline.
You're not even funny! When are you
gonna grow up?

This lands straight in Tony's heart.

TONY

Stop the car.

ELI

Don't be an idiot. I'll find the
nearest airport and get us out.

TONY

(almost a whisper)

No, I'm serious. Stop the car.

The new tone makes Eli brake. Tony exits. He leans in the
open passenger window.

TONY (CONT'D)

You know, I reject the idea I have
to follow the scripted path to
success. You and everyone else
spits on my dreams. Well, I can't
listen one more minute.

Tony's normally boisterous personality is restrained.

TONY (CONT'D)

I could be funny, but you're so
focused on yourself, you ruin
everything.

Now Eli is hurt. He peels the car out. Tony's heavy steps
carry him down the dirt road.

116 INT. HARV'S CAR - DAY 116

As Eli drives away, he sees Tony in the rearview. Eli's anger turns to disappointment.

ELI
See ya never.

117 INT. ABEER'S CAR - DAY 117

The phone tracker dots CLOSE IN on the cabin!

118 INT. AIRPORT - DAY 118

Eli approaches the ticket counter.

ELI
How much for the next flight? Any destination.

The ticket agent, FELICITY (30), brunette, types a couple commands.

FELICITY
Let's see...you're looking at eight hundred and thirteen dollars.

ELI
Where am I gonna get...

He looks around. A mother is frantically trying to wrangle her toddler. Her older son, LONNIE (9), helps. The mother hands Lonnie her credit card and points to the vending machine.

Eli smiles at Felicity.

ELI (CONT'D)
I'll be right back.

119 INT. AIRPORT - DAY 119

Lonnie turns from the vending machine with arms full of candy, fruit snacks, and chips. Two fingers hold the credit card.

Eli steps into frame and SNAPS out his business card.

ELI
Eli Walker, life coach.

120 EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY 120

As Tony walks the road, the Tesla Model X SPEEDS BY.

121 INT. AIRPORT - DAY 121

Eli continues his con with the kid.

ELI

Got a lot of snacks there. You'll drop everything holding it that way. Let me show you how to stack.

While building a logical stack with flat items on the bottom, Eli SNAGS the credit card and pockets it and a PACK OF M&Ms.

LONNIE

Thanks for your help, mister.

Eli smiles.

ELI

Sure thing, kid.

Lonnie walks away. Eli watches. As the kid approaches his mother, her phone rings, and she tells Lonnie to watch the younger brother MOS.

Lonnie dumps the snacks on a seat and hugs his little brother. The show of brotherly love hits Eli hard.

He looks at the credit card.

When he looks up, a line appears on an LED text scroller behind him: "true freedom means running to relationship, mess and all."

CUT TO:

122 INT. AIRPORT - DAY 122

Lonnie holds his younger brother.

Eli leans into frame and snaps out the credit card and M&Ms.

ELI

You dropped these.

123 EXT. AIRPORT - DAY 123

Eli sprints out the door.

124 EXT. HARV'S CABIN - DAY

124

Tony limps down the road, mumbling angrily to himself. He turns a corner and sees the clearing where they buried Harv. Abeer's there holding his gun!

ABEER

You must be Tony.

Abeer looks insane with his sleepless eyes and crazy outfit.

TONY

Who are you?

ABEER

Friend of your brother. Where is he?

TONY

Probably Guam.

ABEER

No. This cabin's the perfect place to hide. He's coming back, and when he does, I'll be waiting.

125 EXT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT - DAY

125

Harv's car peels out.

126 INT. HARV'S CABIN - DAY

126

Tony sits on the ground. Abeer rummages through the empty duffel.

ABEER

I don't believe you.

TONY

We never even brought it. I swear.

ABEER

But who's just gonna leave his brother?

TONY

Mister, you got a lot to learn about Eli.

ABEER

Contact him.

TONY

How? He tosses his phone constantly. I've never had a good number for him. He chooses when he's in my life, and this time, I think he's gone forever.

ABEER

You'd better tell me something useful or this gun will do some talking of its own.

INTERCUT: Harv's car speeds on the road near the airport.

INTERCUT: the cabin.

TONY

I'll make a deal with you: If I tell you the funniest joke of all time, will you let me go?

Abeer considers.

ABEER

If you can make Kevin laugh...sure.

TONY

Who's Kevin?

ABEER

Me. If it's not funny, I get to shoot you.

TONY

(nervous)
Sounds fair.

INTERCUT: Eli speeds down the highway.

INTERCUT: Tony gulps and begins his joke.

TONY (CONT'D)

There was this bunny-rabbit. He was a real jean fiend. He goes to Brentwood in the middle of summer...

INTERCUT: Eli careens down a dirt road. He sees Abeer's Tesla parked in a ditch.

ELI

No, no, no, come on!

Eli accelerates.

INTERCUT: Tony finishes the joke hesitantly.

TONY

...And the bunny rabbit says,
"Stew? Sounds like walrus
propaganda to me!" Get it? Prop-
aganda?

Push in tight as Abeer considers the joke. It's a long moment. Does he think it's funny? He actually might...

HE LEVELS THE GUN AT TONY!

ABEER

You are not funny.

As he pulls the trigger, ELI DIVES IN!

ELI

Yes he is!

The round catches Eli's right shoulder and knocks him down.

TONY

Eli!

Tony runs over and cradles Eli's head in his lap.

Abeer points his gun at Tony.

ABEER

I'm sorry, but Kevin doesn't do
witnesses.

Abeer pulls the trigger. NOTHING HAPPENS. He turns the gun to the side: the first round is stovepiped--jammed into the ejection port.

Abeer slaps the pistol repeatedly.

ABEER (CONT'D)

You...junky-trashcan-Arbuckle-gun-
dealer-carjacker-antique-flintlock-
sheet-metal-gunk-filled-rustbucket-
faux-shot-false-advertising-gas-
mask, duck-billed-piece-of-
craptypus!

As he struggles with the jammed mechanism, he turns to see a FIST CONTACT HIS FACE. IT'S FRANK, knocking the would-be assassin to the ground.

The janky gun goes flying. Abeer lands. He sees his pistol on the other side of the room. Frank points his gun.

FRANK

Don't even think about it.

He tosses a pair of handcuffs.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Put 'em on!

Abeer obeys and shrinks into the corner.

Frank looks at the brothers then AIMS HIS REVOLVER AT THEM!

FRANK (CONT'D)

I saw the grave on the way in. You know I can't let you get away with killing Harv.

HARVEY SITS UP and GASPS for air but nobody sees him!

Frank keeps his gun on the boys for a long moment as Harv stumbles toward the cabin like a drunk.

FRANK (CONT'D)

But we're doing this the right way.

He holsters his pistol and reaches for two more sets of cuffs. A hand hits his shoulder. Frank JUMPS.

Harv inhales; he speaks loudly with dirt in his ears.

HARVEY

THOSE WERE THE BEST DANG PANCAKES I EVER HAD!

Harvey sees his nephew on the ground.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

Eli!

He rushes over and puts pressure on Eli's shoulder.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

Tone, there's a med kit in the car, get it.

Tony runs off.

FRANK

Want me to call it in?

HARVEY

Takes more than a crease to kill a Wallace. Keep it in the family.

FRANK
I can still bring in this piece of
work.

Frank leads Abeer toward the door. Harvey calls him back.

HARVEY
Hey Frank.

Frank turns around.

HARVEY (CONT'D)
Just like the old days.

Frank smiles.

FRANK
It was, wasn't it?

127 EXT. HARV'S CABIN - DAY

127

Abeer stands near the back seat. Frank has his notepad out.

FRANK
Name?

Slow epic push in on Abeer.

ABEER
Kevin.

FRANK
Last name?

ABEER
It's a standalone, like Madonna.

Franks writes with finality.

FRANK
Kevin Madonna, got it.

Abeer makes a face like, "that's actually not bad."

Frank pushes Abeer into the back seat and closes the door.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Weird kid.

128 INT. HARV'S CABIN - DAY

128

The first aid kit is open on the floor; Harv patches Eli's shoulder. Tony helps.

HARVEY

I may have been out, but I heard everything. Even though you were dumping my body, I know it's nothing personal. The way you boys pulled together, that was a good thing.

He shuffles.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

There's something I was wrong about. I'm proud of how you stepped up, Eli, showed real leadership. Selflessness. I needed to give you space to become you. You're a good man, and I do trust you. We're all better with you in our lives.

Harvey lifts his keyring from the ground.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

Cabin's all yours. Makes a great tax shelter, so I've heard.

ELI

Thanks Uncle Harv, but I'm going back to LA. Gotta be there for this guy's inspiring comedy career.

TONY

Eli--

ELI

You don't need to say it--It's all on me. I love you, brother-mine.

They embrace.

TONY

I love you, brother-mine.

129 EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

129

Ancient sequoia trees line a trail, lit by the low sun. Zoey walks until she finds a bench and takes a seat.

She opens the family album and thumbs to pictures of herself as a happy baby. Myrtle, the ever-loving grandmother, accompanies Zoey all throughout.

Zoey stops at a particularly important one: Myrtle holds Young Zoey (3) in her arms; Zoey's face is muddy, hands sticky, and she wears completely soiled clothes. Myrtle's eyes sing symphonies of unmistakable and glimmering love.

Seeing Myrtle cherish her, Zoey's eyes fill with a realization:

ZOEY

I'm worth everything.

The music lifts, and the grandeur of the world, distilled into California's multi-aesthetic scenery, projects onto the canvas of trees behind Zoey like punctuation for her epiphany:

-Sweeping desert vistas

-Shimmering waters at Clear Lake

-Stars above a redwood tree line

-The grandness fades, replaced by Zoey and Eli enjoying each other's eyes at the campfire.

Zoey ponders as the memory projects behind her.

130 EXT. HARV'S CABIN - DAY 130

The area surrounding the cabin is at peace--almost like the exhale in a prologue, where the drama of the last three days doesn't feel as big.

131 EXT. HARV'S CABIN - DAY 131

Eli stands outside, watching the sunset, shoulder in a sling. He sips coffee and wears flannel comfortably. He's the image of peaceful stillness--far from when we met him.

The sound of wheels rolling on dirt fades up; a car pulls into view with Zoey at the wheel. She walks over.

ZOEY

Was that your uncle I saw on the way in? And what happened to you?

ELI
It's been a weird day. Did you
drive that thing?

She shakes a little bottle of Dramamine.

ZOEY
With no stops.

ELI
Zo, that's incredible.

He looks deeply into her eyes.

ZOEY
You're not watching the sunset.

ELI
I found someone more beautiful.

Zoey smiles at him.

ZOEY
I believe you.

She reaches her hand out. Eli takes it.

Even though the sunset illuminates the forest in softness, we
care more about the light shining through Zoey and Eli's
twined fingers.

FADE TO BLACK.

Credits.

132 INT. FOYER - NIGHT 132

TIGHT ON: clasped hands.

Track with Eli and Zoey entering a comedy club as Tony talks
in voiceover.

TONY (V.O.)
...and then, I kid you not, he
stumbles over to us, grabs him by
the shoulder, and says...

133 INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT 133

TIGHT ON: Tony on the mic, wearing a tank top with a tux
print. A banner reads, "Fortuna Talent Club's open mic
series."

TONY
 THOSE WERE THE BEST DANG PANCAKES I
 EVER HAD!

The club LOSES THEIR MINDS with laughter. Harv is in the audience laughing and whooping and applauding. A stack of FRESH PANCAKES is in front of him.

Tony sees Eli and Zoey in the back.

TONY (CONT'D)
 I want to dedicate this set to our
 founder, Zoey Taylor.

The crowd applauds.

TONY (CONT'D)
 Our head of donor relations is here
 tonight, my brother, Eli Wallace!

Someone drops a check in the donation box at the back: the real MILO VENTIMIGLIA! The patrolman approaches.

PATROLMAN
 Mister V! You tried to donate all
 subtle-like, but I noticed. Could I
 get your autograph?

Milo smiles and signs a photo. He takes his place at a table of NOTEWORTHY CELEBRITIES.

Tony basks in the applause. He does a signature victory move.

TONY
 Chicken dab!

The crowd roars with laughter.

TIGHT ON: Tony smiling. FADE OUT on his joyful look.

Credits continue.

134 INT. PRISON - DAY

134

Two GUARDS walk down the hall with Abeer between them. He carries two sheets. His smirk suggests he feels like a real Kevin.

The three men stop at a cell and open the door. Abeer walks in and sees his future cellmate: IT'S GUY!

Guy recognizes him.

GUY

Roomie!

Abeer's face drops in horror.

ABEER

No.

End.