

RUN, TIGER, RUN

By

Howard Sewell

Howard Sewell  
10317 Sunset Blvd.  
OKC, OK. 73120  
Hsewell1963@gmailcom  
405.388.3343  
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FADE IN.

EXT. NATIONAL PARK - BEFORE DAWN

A jeep winds through the road in Big Bend National Park.

INT/EXT. JEEP

A 40 something white man, THE RUNNER, drives - listening to Tom Petty's "Free Falling." He flicks a plastic toy tiger hanging from his rear view mirror.

The Runner pulls the jeep off the road and parks. He grabs the toy tiger and exits the Jeep. He tugs at his running shorts and straightens his plain grey t-shirt.

The Runner walks to the trunk, gets his running shoes, head lamp and camelback. He closes the trunk - there's an "ultra-runner" and "Semper Fi" bumper stickers.

The Runner sits down, putting on his shoes and equipment.

INT. PARK - BEFORE DAWN

A 20 something female Hispanic BORDER AGENT is driving toward a mountain in Big Bend. She clicks the CD player, "Bad to the Bone" plays. The Agent sees a drone's light flashing in the sky headed in the same direction and she accelerates.

EXT. PARK - BEFORE DAWN

Two men stand on a mountain top. The DRIVER and his BOSS are both 30 something Hispanic men.

A drone lands and the DRIVER unhooks the cargo. The drone flies off. The Driver drags the load over to the Hummer.

DRIVER  
That's it Jefe.

The Boss heads over to the vehicle to see the whole load.

BOSS  
Time to try a new formula on the  
Gringos.  
(chuckles)

The Driver closes the door. Both men turn around at the same time. A Ford Bronco pulls up, headlights shining. The men shield their eyes with one hand to see, while steadying their free hand behind their backs.

The Agent bursts out of her vehicle with weapon drawn.

AGENT  
(yelling)  
Get your hands up where I can see  
them!

The Driver pulls his weapon, firing at the Agent. She returns fire, finding cover behind her car door. The Driver kneels beside the Hummer, partially obscured to the Agent. The Boss circles behind the Bronco.

The Agent grabs her radio.

AGENT (CONT'D)  
Base, Bravo 2, under fire.

The Driver fires again. The Agent drops the radio.

RADIO (V.O.)  
Come again, Bravo 2. I did not  
read.

EXT. PARK - DAWN

The Runner tops the mountain, rounding a corner between two large boulders. He sees two men, a Hummer, a Bronco and hears a gunshot. He sees someone drop. The Runner turns quickly and slips - throwing up gravel.

The two men turn and fire in the Runner's direction. The Runner instinctively touches TIGER and he sprints to the other side of the mountain.

BOSS  
Who the hell was that?

DRIVER  
Probably just a hiker.

BOSS  
Loose end. I don't like loose  
ends.

Driver nods. Boss looks around.

BOSS (CONT'D)  
Let's work this guy from both ends.

DRIVER  
Jefe?

BOSS  
Grab some water and track this guy  
down the mountain. I'll start at  
the bottom and work my way up.

DRIVER  
How far is the trail?

BOSS  
I don't give a shit how far it is,  
we get this fucker.

DRIVER  
Si Boss. What about The Agent?

BOSS  
Throw her body in her car and move  
it behind some rocks.

EXT. PARK TRAIL - DAWN

The Runner stops, catching his breath. He drinks water from his camelback. Blood drips down his arm from a small wound - nicked by a bullet. He uses his neck wrap to stop the bleeding.

RUNNER  
(looking toward Tiger)  
You think they are following us?

The Runner looks back and then down the trail further. He sees a tree line in ahead. He touches Tiger and runs at a slower pace.

FLASHBACK AFGHANISTAN VILLAGE - MORNING

The Runner walks with his squad on patrol in a village. Several old men sit on old cans, watching the soldiers. SARGE, 30 something black man, walks with The Runner.

THE RUNNER

Sarge, I'm not seeing any  
combatants, just old men and women.

SARGE

Seeing this is your first village  
patrol, I'll forgive your  
ignorance.

THE RUNNER

Gee, thanks Sarge.

SARGE

You never know from one minute to  
the next, so keep your eyes peeled.

THE RUNNER

Copy that.

Sarge looks back and sees someone running out of the village.

SARGE

LIEUTENANT! We got a runner!

Lieutenant, 20 something white man, looks back.

LIEUTENANT

Go get him!

SARGE

(looking at the Runner)  
Yes sir! Go get him soldier.

The Runner sprints after THE KID. After 200 meters, the  
Runner gains on The Kid.

THE RUNNER

Shit, this guy is fast!

The Runner grabs The Kid's shirt - the Kid falls. The Runner turns him over, kneeling on his torso.

THE RUNNER (CONT'D)  
You're just a kid.

THE KID  
(Farsi language)  
Fuck you.

The Kid rolls to his side, turns quickly and stabs The Runner. The Runner grabs his stomach, revealing blood on his fatigues and on Tiger. The Kid runs off.

THE RUNNER  
What the fuck Tiger?

EXT. UPPER MOUNTAIN TRAIL - MORNING

The Runner approaches a fork in the trail. He stops, rubs his head and looks at both trails.

RUNNER  
I don't remember the one to the left.

Suddenly, a coyote appears on the trail to the right. The coyote pauses, looks at the Runner. Their eyes meet for a few moments, then the coyote runs down the trail to the left.

RUNNER (CONT'D)  
OK...The road less traveled.

The Runner jogs on the path to his left, following well behind the coyote.

EXT. UPPER MOUNTAIN TRAIL SAME SPOT - MORNING

The Driver walks down the path - stops for water. He sees two paths diverging. He walks over and inspects the ground closely. He sees more footprints for the path to the right. He grunts and goes to the right.

EXT. LOWER MOUNTAIN TRAIL - MORNING

The Boss parks his vehicle behind some rocks. He grabs a rifle, binoculars, and a canteen as he steps out. Boss looks through the binoculars. Seeing nothing, he moves to the trail. He taps his holster to feel his hand gun.

EXT. UPPER MOUNTAIN TRAIL - MID-MORNING

The Runner sits under a tree, resting and drinking water. He hears rustling and crouches for action. THE HIKER, 20 something white woman, clad in shorts and a day pack emerges. The Runner grabs her.

THE HIKER

What the fuck dude?

THE RUNNER

(Releasing her)

Sorry, I -

THE HIKER

You scared the shit out of me. Are you crazy?



THE RUNNER

(Softly)

Listen, there are two guys chasing me. I saw them shoot someone earlier.

The Hiker steps back, rubbing her arm where he grabbed her.

THE HIKER

For reals?

THE RUNNER

Yeah, for reals!

(Points to his wound)

THE HIKER

Well, fuck me!

THE RUNNER

We've got to get out of here. I think the best way is down this trail to my car.

THE HIKER

Let's get the hell out of Dodge!

The Runner and Hiker walk briskly down the trail.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

EXT. WILSON REFORM SCHOOL - DAY

The twelve year old Runner walks with a COP into an old brick school.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

THE PRINCIPAL sees The Runner and Cop coming and waves them into his office.

THE COP  
He's your problem now.

The Runner barely acknowledges The Cop leaving. The Principal closes the door.

THE PRINCIPAL  
Take a seat son.

The Principal sits behind the desk. The Runner sits in a chair.

THE PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)  
Your case is sealed, so I don't know exactly why you are here, but it can't be good.

The Principal pauses for effect, but The Runner doesn't say anything. The Runner reaches in his pocket to touch Tiger.

THE PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)  
You'll get three squares a day and an education. What you do with it is up to you. Do you have any questions?

THE RUNNER  
Do you have a cross country team?

EXT. LOWER MOUNTAIN TRAIL RIGHT BRANCH - MID-MORNING

The Driver stumbles down the trail. He tips his bottle, it's empty. He throws the bottle down.

He takes a few more steps, then falls to the ground. He crawls under a tree and curls into a fetal position, weeping.

EXT. LOWER MOUNTAIN TRAIL LEFT BRANCH - MID-MORNING

The Runner and Hiker sit under a tree, eating an energy bar and drinking water.

THE HIKER

My car is not too far off the trail.

THE RUNNER

Mine too.

THE HIKER

You think they gave up?

THE RUNNER

Could be...not sure.

The Hiker stands up to stretch. The Runner reaches up to pull her down. A shot rings out and The Hiker falls limp.

EXT. LOWER MOUNTAIN TRAIL LEFT BRANCH

The Boss looks through his rifle site and sees a person fall. Suddenly, there's another person, The Runner in his site. He squeezes off several shots, missing The Runner. He's out of ammo. He sets the rifle down and tracks The Runner.

The Runner sprints up a different trail.

FLASHBACK

INT. THE RUNNERS HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

The eleven year old Runner sits at the kitchen table doing his homework. His MOM walks in, setting down grocery bags.

MOM

Get that homework done son and then we can watch Bonanza.

The Runner nods his head and keeps working. MOM puts away groceries. She grabs an item and turns toward The Runner.

MOM (CONT'D)

I know you wanted this last time we were at the store.

MOM dangles a plastic Tiger from her finger. The Runner's face lights up.

THE RUNNER

Thanks Mom!

The Runner grabs Tiger, looking at him closely.

MOM

Looks like you are about done. Go in the living room and turn on the TV. I'll be in there in a bit.

The Runner turns on the TV, but continues to play around with Tiger. A door slams. DAD stumbles into the kitchen.

DAD

(Slurring)

Where's my damn supper woman?

MOM  
Your home so early.

DAD  
Son bitch company let me go.

MOM  
Again?

DAD  
Are you sassing me woman?

Dad takes a swing at Mom, she ducks and he misses. He falls toward the stove. The Runner comes into the kitchen.

Dad picks up a cast iron skillet off the stove, turns and cold cocks Mom. She lays on the floor with blood flowing from the back of her head. Dad bends down over her, shouting.

DAD (CONT'D)  
Get up woman and make me my supper.

The Runner grabs a knife off the counter and moves toward Dad. Dad lifts his head up to see The Runner.

The Runner thrusts the knife into Dad's neck. Dad stumbles back, grabbing his throat, looking at the Runner with an amused look. He falls down, with blood oozing out of his neck.

The Runner drops the knife, looks at his mother's lifeless eyes and at his Dad's dying body.

THE RUNNER  
Tiger, let's get out of here.

The Runner goes out the backdoor with Tiger, running toward the woods.

EXT. TRAIL DEAD END - NOON

The Runner reaches a dead end. He walks in each direction looking for another trail. There's a high rock wall to the north and south and a steep cliff. He looks toward the trail he just traversed.

THE RUNNER

End of the road Tiger, time to improvise.

EXT. TRAIL DEAD END - LATER

The Boss sees the trail end ahead. He slowly stalks his prey. A bush move slightly ahead to his right. He moves in that direction with his handgun at the ready.

The bush moves again - he fires his gun three times into the bush. He approaches cautiously, seeing a string by the bush.

The Runner springs from behind the Boss, knocking him down and the gun away. They struggle on the ground. The Boss grabs a knife from his boot, slashing and cutting The Runner.

The Runner rolls away, standing and holding his bleeding side. The Runner backs to a ledge, stumbles and falls over the edge.

The Boss grins as he approaches the ledge. He looks over the edge of the cliff. The Runner reaches up grabbing The Boss's ankle and pulling him over the cliff. The Boss falls to his death.

The Runner rises from a ledge that lay just below the cliff. He pats himself to feel Tiger. Tiger is gone. The Runner frantically pats himself all over. He runs around the area, looking for Tiger.

THE RUNNER  
TIGER! TIGER!  
(He cries uncontrollably)

He runs to the edge of the cliff. Looking over, he sees his camelback on a branch. Tiger is swaying back and forth. He reaches and hauls in the camelback with Tiger.

Crying, he holds Tiger, rocking back and forth.

THE RUNNER (CONT'D)  
Don't leave me Tiger...Everyone  
else leaves me. You are all I  
have!

The Runner presses Tiger to his heart, closes his eyes. His lips move. He wipes away the tears and stands. Holding onto Tiger with his hand.

THE RUNNER (CONT'D)  
Let's head home Tiger.

The Runner jogs down the trail.

FADE OUT.