

THE TURNAROUND

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DIRECTED BY JUDITH McDOWELL

1984 CADILLAC Fleetwood.
Mint condition, leather interior, senior owned & always maintained. High mileage, selling on behalf of father.
\$2995 obo.

Scene: Outdoors. Night. Very loud rock music that is abruptly shut off mid-song. Silence for a few seconds, followed by the sound of crickets in dark. One man sits silently centre stage, propped against a large boulder or stump, the other man crouches by his side. There is no illumination until the flashlight is used, at which time a faint spot can come up to augment the flashlight.

SAM

I got a flashlight in the trunk.

(pause)

OK, OK, just keep pressing that, I'm going to get the flashlight and we'll see how it looks, OK?

Gets up to retrieve flashlight.

Alright, hang on. I've got some shit back here. My old man always had a tote bag full of emergency shit — candles, oil, some kind of belt — here we go.

Turns on flashlight, revealing Lawrence sitting on floor, back propped against something, with a bloody napkin pressed to his forehead. Sam squats beside Lawrence again, opens tote bag and rummages through it.

Fuck, you know, I'm such an asshole!

Slaps his forehead with palm of his hand.

Un-fucking believable.

LAWRENCE

It wasn't your fault.

SAM

Yeah, well that'd be a change of pace wouldn't it?

(pause)

Sweet fucking Jesus....

LAWRENCE

Get my cell. It's in this pocket. Jacket.

SAM

There's an A with a circle. Analogue? But nothing. Nada. Fucking things don't work up here, which is just where you want them to work. The antenna's broke. Maybe that's why it won't pick up anything.

LAWRENCE

It wasn't working down in the valley either. She tried to make a call back there, borrowed it to make a call before the turnaround.

SAM

Before the turnaround?

LAWRENCE

Before the turnaround. That's one fucking thing we got in our favour. Fucking piece of shit didn't work!

SAM

Pockets phone.

My father was a wrestler. He used to wrestle. He was always putting us in a half nelson, you know, or showing us some takedown move on the living room floor. Fucking drove my mom crazy. Insane. We get in the referee's down position and my dad would get down on his knees — you know the referee's down position? — right

in the middle of the living room and “whoomp”, we’d be like on our back so fast your head would bounce off the floor. You ever wrestle?

Pause.

He injured his back. You wouldn’t have heard of him. This was before wrestling was big. He taught at the junior high.

Pause

He’d be so pissed off right now. He’d get into rages if we ever did anything to this car. He loved this car. He had this little bottle of goop — I saw him one time on one of those little roly mechanic’s things? — sitting in the driveway cleaning the whitewalls with a cotton swab, right? It was a status symbol, you know. A Cadillac. A phys ed teacher with a brand new Caddy. Not even the principal had one, you know. My dad’s other car was a beater. A rice burner, we called it. “Dat sun of a bitch keeps running. He still drives — drove — the Datsun and just took this one out Sundays. It was like a status symbol he was afraid to use.

LAWRENCE

Your father alive? He know you got the car?

SAM

He umm, yes, he’s in hospital. Getting better but still, you know — old.

LAWRENCE

So you’re selling the car? Were.

SAM

I was supposed to sell it this fucking weekend! So it’d be out of the garage by the time he comes back from the hospital. The freezer’s going too, tons of shit in the garage, even his golf cart. And the motel. They’re selling everything off. The motel’s listed at 900 thousand something. They had it listed over a million last month, but they’ve lowered the price.

LAWRENCE

So what about the car?

SAM

Fucking fuck-up!

Squats, runs hands repeatedly over his head.

LAWRENCE

Light one of these candles. And give me my phone back.

SAM

Yeah.

Hands phone back to Lawrence without looking up.

LAWRENCE

So you gotta come up with three grand.

Pause.

Say you sold the car to someone on their way through town, took them for a ride, they liked the car, gave you cash and fucked off.

SAM

Three grand! Right!

Pause.

She have any money?

LAWRENCE

Thirty, forty bucks. A couple of travellers' cheques. That's it.

SAM

How the fuck did we get started?

LAWRENCE

Don't go there. We don't even want to go there.

SAM

No, I mean, what the fuck? You're a fucking psycho! I'm glad you're the one who put his head through the window and not the other way around. If it was me you probably would fucking leave me here bleeding to death, right? Am I right? I can totally see it.

LAWRENCE

Calm down. What's happened is happened. There's nothing you or I can do to make that turn out a different way. We have to deal with the facts before us. Just the facts.

Pause.

What else you have in the bag?

SAM

You cold? I saw she had a sleeping bag. A nice one. New. One of those MEC three-season jobbies.

LAWRENCE

I'm not getting into her sleeping bag, fuckwad. Give me the tote.

Pats his thigh gingerly, rummages one-handed in his pant pocket.

There's a knife here. Open it for me.

Tosses folded knife to Sam.

Cut a piece out of your sleeve.

SAM

My sleeve? It's a new goddamn shirt.

Pause.

There's a blanket or something in the trunk.

LAWRENCE

Get me the blanket. And get me the bitch's pack from the back seat.

SAM

Brings blanket, cuts off long strip with the knife, then brings a heavy backpack and plunks it beside Lawrence.

The fuck is in this thing?

Makes to open the pack.

LAWRENCE

Don't touch it!

Pause. Both men glare at each other.

Lawrence props his elbow on the top of the pack and takes the red napkin from his forehead, looks at the bandage.

How does it look?

SAM

Peers at Lawrence's forehead wound, whistles.

Fuck. You got some glass in there still. You want me to dig it out?

LAWRENCE

That might be a nice gesture. There's tweezers in the end of the knife.

SAM

Holds knife under flashlight.

We'd better get rid of this. Look.

Holds knife and flashlight so Lawrence can examine the knife.

LAWRENCE

Takes knife and flings it offstage.

Can you get the car started again?

SAM

It's totally fucked. We'll have to wait for morning and walk back to the highway. Fuck that pisses me off. Fuuuck!

LAWRENCE

I think my leg is broken too. It's swelled up all the way down. Fucking kills.

SAM

You're not going to walk out of here, my friend.

LAWRENCE

Puts new rag to his forehead.

We couldn't drive anywhere with the windshield busted out anyway.

SAM

Fucking Mounties!

LAWRENCE

Shut up. I'm trying to think.

Pause.

That was a nice car.

SAM

Leather. Totally fucking mint. Not vinyl or whatever they call it. Nuagat. Nougat? Naugahyde.

LAWRENCE

Your old man got a shovel back there in the trunk?

SAM

There's like a crowbar and a jack.

Pause.

Maybe the crowbar, but that'd take fucking forever. The little head on that thing is

like — one inch. That's like a teaspoon at a time.

LAWRENCE

Digs in tote bag.

Here's a pair of gloves. Take the crowbar and go off the road as far as you can, 50 feet or so. Get in under some salal or something. Once you get down past the root mat it should be easy going.

SAM

Ah for fuck's sake.

LAWRENCE

Take this candle and the flashlight.

Pause.

I'll help you in a bit. When this bleeding stops.

Pause.

You'll have to carry her into the bush. Can you do that on your own? Be careful of her clothes so you don't tear anything on a branch.

Pause.

And then there's the car to deal with. How close are we to that lake?

SAM

Points flashlight around into darkness.

Who the fuck knows. It's the middle of fucking nowhere. A mile? Half a mile? It's all downhill mostly.

LAWRENCE

Maybe we can get the car rolling, coast down to the lake.

SAM

With no lights? We'll both end up with our heads through the fucking windshield.

Pause.

We used to come up here sometimes when we were kids, fishing. No one comes up here anymore. Fished out. Or poisoned from the clearcuts.

LAWRENCE

Maybe in the morning, as soon as it's light enough to see. We'll figure out what to do.

SAM

I don't want to see. We should have stopped at the turnaround. Just fucking stopped while we were ahead.

Exits with gloves, tote bag, candle and flashlight.

LAWRENCE

Opens backpack, finds a girl's sweater, holds it to his face, smelling it, rocks slowly into darkness.