

TRAVELLINK

Written by

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INT. DETERIORATED PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Empty, cavernous. ONE LONE VEHICLE in the middle level, not parked, but stationery in the lane. Suddenly, THREE ADULT MEN, PETER, CARLO, and SMUDGE, all about 30, seen below begin to rise towards the car. As they get close, amplified chatter to the vehicle's DRIVER.

PETER

O.P.! You know you got m--

DRIVER

Yeah, yeah, shut the fuck up, man.
This ain't a party, and I sure as
shit ain't your fuckin' friend.

PETER nervously chuckles. Looks to his boys; no help.

PETER

Alright, so what's in the bag?

DRIVER

The fuck you mean "what's in"? I
told you last Tuesday, did I not?

PETER

Tues -- no, oh, yeah, yeah, of-- of
course, fuck! Yeah, no.

DRIVER

So I didn't tell you? Or Jay next
to me gotta fix your ears.

JAY, 20, in the passenger seat, sipping tea from a cup.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Jay--

Off guard, JAY tries to look menacing and deciding between gun-fingers and clasp his fist, fails to do both and awkwardly stares at PETER.

PETER

Uh-- no, yeah, you did tell me.

DRIVER

NO OR FUCKING YES!

DRIVER, irritated, pulls out a .45.

PETER

Yes! You told me! You said --

DRIVER

Then why you keep saying no, bitch-ass!

SMUDGE steps in.

SMUDGE

I think, what he meant, to, like -- I think he said, "yeah", like yes, but he was also like "no" -- cause, yeah, no. No, but he did tell us, though, Peter. Yeah, no.

DRIVER

WHAT THE F -- Ay, the coke's 25 now. If prickly-neck says shit again, this .45's gonna wake up.

SMUDGE feels his unshaven neck, offended by the comment.

SMUDGE

Oh, it tickles!

DRIVER

That's it!

DRIVER holds the gun and rises it to SMUDGE --

-- before being BLASTED by PETER. PETER quickly makes work on JAY, and as CARLO and distraught SMUDGE grab the cocaine bags, PETER takes one last look at lying DRIVER, and takes one final SHOT.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

TITLE CARD: Somewhere in NEVADA

Walking along the rows of used rentals are DAMON ELLISON, 25, lean build, and next to him, CLARA BURKE, 23, pregnant.

DAMON

I just don't see why we didn't go with Enterprise. Or even Dollar.

CLARA

They did say it was the cheapest option.

DAMON

Yeah? And who's they, *Grandmas Favorite Cars* magazine? The way the paint chips? Jesus, it looks like Bob Ross's worst goddamn nightmare.

CLARA
 (thinks a moment)
 -- who? Whatever, it's just a
 rental car.

INT. TRAVELLINK CAR - CONTINUOUS

Head-on, we see DAMON driving, CLARA opposite him. DAMON turns the ignition, and suddenly a LOUD BLARING MESSAGE overtakes the entire car. They both jump.

INTERCOM
 WELCOME TO TRAVELLI --

CLARA
 FUCKING G--!

DAMON and CLARA both cover their ears then instantly try to suppress the noise.

INTERCOM
 WEATHER TODAY IS A BRISK SEVENTY --

DAMON hits several buttons all at once and manages to turn it off -- with the windshield wipers. He smiles at Clara.

DAMON
 Whatever, it's just a rental car.

They both laugh, most of it from relief. Damon looks at her. A beat.

CLARA
 I'm glad we're doing this.

DAMON
 Me too, sweetie.

INT. TRAVELLINK CAR - MORNING

On the road, churning patiently down the highway. CLARA tries to activate air conditioning, to no avail. She tries to roll up her window. It's busted.

CLARA
 It's fine.

DAMON
 What?

Just then, DAMON's phone BUZZES. He reads: 'Mom'.

DAMON (CONT'D)

Oh, fuck.

CLARA

What? Is it your --

DAMON shoots her a glance. Yes, it is.

INT. DAMON'S MOM'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Like something from a Pynchon novel, Damon's mother KATHY, 56, currently applying far too much makeup, lives in a home of vintage varnish, uncomfortable carpeting, and furniture strewn about like the staging of a murder. It's safe to say she lost care long enough ago.

KATHY

(shrieking)

You give up yet?

INT. TRAVELINK CAR

DAMON and listening CLARA are now fully focused on this call.

DAMON

No, mom, I haven't.

He looks at CLARA lovingly.

DAMON (CONT'D)

And I'm not going to.

INT. KATHY'S DINING ROOM

KATHY does her lips, big red lines that go an inch out from her mouth.

KATHY

Mmmm. Your father said the same thing about getting another goddamn job come about this time, and how'd that work out for him, sweetie?

KATHY's husband DARRELL calls from the couch in the living room.

DARRELL

What's that, hon?

KATHY shoots back.

KATHY
 Nothing, hon!
 (to PHONE)
 Fucking deadbeat.

INT. TRAVELLINK CAR

DAMON is speechless, aghast at his mother's ruthlessness.
 CLARA has to stifle her surprised chuckle.

DAMON
 I -- yeah, okay, why'd you call me,
 again?

INT. KATHY'S BATHROOM

Now with bright pink curlers in hair, KATHY puffs a cigar.

KATHY
 I just really can't believe it.

DAMON (O.S)
 Well, believe it. I said I'm
 marrying her, and I'm marrying her.
 We're having this family.

KATHY
 Uh huh. Marrying in the land of
 whores and neat whisky. I'm sure
 her dress will be topped off with
 the words "married girly" in
 glitter. Christ.

INT. TRAVELLINK CAR

DAMON is becoming increasingly agitated, to nobody's
 surprise.

DAMON
 We aren't even gambling! You know I
 hate to -- and I told you, mom,
 Vegas is the only place that will
 marry us, considering you and dad
 won't support me with anything.

KATHY (O.S.)
 (masking offended)
 I can't believe you would -- dad is
 out of a job!
 (MORE)

KATHY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Can't you picture how much it pains
 him to not pay for it or see it?
 He's crushed, hon, crushed!

INT. KATHY'S LIVING ROOM

We see DARRELL, 60, enjoying ice cream on the couch, licking around the spoon.

INT. TRAVELLINK CAR

KATHY (O.S)
 And she's *obese*, Damon?

DAMON
 She's EXPECTING!

KATHY
 -- a chocolate cake?

DAMON
 I -- I'm -- done. I -- goodbye.

In a fit of anger, he hangs up. Silence for a moment.

CLARA
 You want to get some snacks?

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

A typical AM/PM. The business is slow. DAMON browses soda in the fridge, and eyeballs a woman next to him. He quickly looks her head to toe and looks away, slightly ashamed.

CLARA is in the chips aisle, and a standee for quick lotto games catches her eye. She glances at DAMON, who is occupied with drinks, and she quickly pockets a scratch-it ticket.

EXT. GAS STATION LOT - DAY

Across the street, PETER, CARLO, and SMUDGE are running haphazardly down the block, bags in hand, while two BLARING POLICE CARS chase them down. The men quickly dodge into the gas station lot, and run past the Travellink with the passenger window down.

PETER
 Hey!

The others follow, and they all begin shoving the bags into the car's glove box, shutting it and then dashing off once again JUST AS

DAMON and CLARA walk out of the store and towards the car.

DAMON
And to think we were gonna go
without snack--

The car blares its welcome message once again.

INTERCOM
WELCOME--

DAMON
HOLY GOD --

-- and quickly fiddles with the windshield wipers. Collective deep breath.

INT. TRAVELLINK CAR - MINUTES LATER

DAMON driving still, CLARA eating pretzels beside.

CLARA
Does your mother hate me?

DAMON's eyes widen. Not now.

CLARA (CONT'D)
I mean -- I don't, Jesus, I don't
know...

DAMON
Hey, hey. No. That's... no. She's
stiff, you know that. Stiff, that's
all.

CLARA registers a weak smile, but isn't quite convinced.

CLARA
She's never even registered me as a
girlfriend, or interest, or
anything. She'd always treat me
like... your friend.

DAMON
She's stiff. I can't really... and
besides, she's just my mom, and
we're in love, what does it matter?

CLARA

Because, babe. If we do this, she's my mom too.

DAMON

I -- I don't think we need to do this --

CLARA

What? So it can be brought up again?

DAMON

Sweetheart.

CLARA

--you're always saying we don't need to, we don't need it, you're just putting off the --

The CAR SHAKES violently.

The two are able to adjust, but are thrown off-center.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ.

DAMON

It came from your side, you see anything?

CLARA's view is just traffic.

CLARA

I --

From DAMON's side, another SHAKE, and the two swerve into the lane over.

DAMON makes out a car with three HEADS all looking towards him, locking eyes with PETER. They begin to fire off a round when DAMON throws the car brake on. He loses the other car, who speeds past. The car behind them hits their bumper.

DAMON

What the f--

INTERCOM

WELCOME T--

DAMON, flustered, throws his hands to the wipers, and puts his head down. The cars behind pass them slowly.

A few moments to breathe.

DAMON

Are you --

CLARA is seen, tightly holding her belly.

CLARA

Yeah, it's fine. I'm fine.

DAMON throws his hands on the wheel, and begins to pull to the coming exit. Once there, he pulls over.

CLARA (CONT'D)

They looked at you.

DAMON

What?

CLARA

They looked right at you, babe.
Straight in the face.

DAMON

I don't think --

CLARA

-- like they knew you.

DAMON

You aren't serious?

CLARA

No. I guess not. I'm... sorry.

DAMON looks at her, confused. He starts the car back up, attentively flicks the windshield wipers before a sound hits, and continues driving as the sun descends above.

INT. POLICE STATION LOBBY - NIGHT

Somehow, with all of the available space, OFFICER MORREY's desk is still cluttered to its capacity.

MORREY, 45, robust, likes the occasional soda, as he does now. Fields a call from the desk phone.

MORREY

Officer Morrey... no, I didn't get any call... I don't get calls... no, Jasper, I meant tonight, of course I get calls, in general, I... yes, my wife calls me... yeah, she liked the gift, Jasper -- what are you calling me for?

MORREY starts taking notes on a pad.

MORREY (CONT'D)

Uh huh... two of -- three of em? On the 26?... shit ... who called in?... oh, okay, yeah, I'll... yeah, tell Glover too... okay, bye, Jasper... yes, I'll tell her you say happy birthday. Yes, she liked the gift, Jasper. Okay. Bye. No, of course she did. You don't need to -- okay, yeah. Bye, Jasper.

MORREY quickly hangs up.

MORREY (CONT'D)

Mmm.

INT. TRAVELLINK CAR - NIGHT

DAMON and CLARA, clearly a little shaken, continue to drive on. DAMON tries to roll his own window up. No chance.

DAMON

Fuck it! Where's the manual in this goddamn --

CLARA

I don't think it'll help.

DAMON

Well, if wipers control the stereo in this thing, maybe the goddamn upholstery controls the windows.

CLARA opens up the dashboard for the manual. Inside, she sees THREE BAGS of COCAINE.

CLARA

WHO NOW?

DAMON

What is it? Is the manual made of fucking gol-- WHAT THE F --

CLARA

It's a fucking lot!

DAMON

How was it plausible for you to bring fucking cocaine in a RENTAL?

CLARA
It's not mine! I'm fucking
pregnant, dumbass!

INT. DINER - NIGHT

PETER, CARLO, and SMUDGE sit in a booth in the very back of a completely empty diner. An old waitress comes by, smoking a cigarette.

WAITRESS
Any more for you boys?

PETER
No. We're set. We got some work to -

SMUDGE
Shirley Temple with ice?

PETER
--the fuck? Uh uh. We're done.

CARLO sees the TRAVELLINK roll through the road outside as the other two argue.

CARLO
Fuck me, boys. Looks like we REALLY
hit the lottery tonight.

CARLO smirks and PETER, peering out, rushes them all out of the diner.

SMUDGE
You seen rabbits?

They rush out. Waitress sees a thousand-dollar tip on the table, takes another puff of the cigarette. Looks back at it, bewildered. As they men drive away, she takes note of the plate and scribbles in on her pad.

INT. TRAVELLINK CAR - NIGHT

DAMON and CLARA, frenzied, continue.

DAMON
Well, I'm... okay, but maybe you
were given it by a friend, like a
fucking GIFT or something, I don't
know!

CLARA
 WHO DO I KNOW that would have
 COCAINE??

DAMON
 Well, Marissa, Paige, the woman you
 work with that has the hobbit
 ears...

CLARA
 HER NAME IS BOBBI, AND IT WAS A
 CHILDHOOD ACCIDENT!

Just then, the car beside them rolls up to them, swerves to the right, and DAMON swerves in reaction. Both cars completely stop. PETER, CARLO, and SMUDGE quickly roll out of the car, and towards the TRAVELLINK.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

MORREY and accompanying OFFICER BLUM (30) drive along the long highway, making small talk.

BLUM
 Would I lie about them fuckers
 cancelling *Shark Week*?

MORREY
 I don't know what you'd do.

BLUM
 I'm not fucking-- I'm angry as
 hell! I wish I was lyin -- how was
 your wife's birthday, by the way?

MORREY
 It was -- how did lying get you to
 my wife's birthday --

BLUM
 You think we're goin too far,
 there? The report said Charter
 Street. This here's Elk.

MORREY
 Fuck.

Morrey's SCANNER BUZZES.

MORREY (CONT'D)
 What you got, Jasper... okay, so
 it's a waitress... so they tip
 well, whatever...
 (MORE)

MORREY (CONT'D)
 we'll make the goddamned trip,
 then. Goddamn. Okay. Okay. Yes, she
 really did like the gift -- yes,
 bye.

MORREY hangs up, looks to BLUM.

MORREY (CONT'D)
 Looks like we're going to the
 boonies.

BLUM
 ... the what?

INT. DETERIORATED PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

The same parking garage we saw previously. DAMON and CLARA are both tied to a post by their arms, as the three men in the distance inspect the car and take inventory of their baggies.

DAMON
 I'm still ready.

CLARA
 What?

DAMON
 We get out of here, I'm still
 ready. I'm not going home. I wanna
 marry you.

CLARA
 Tomorrow's--

DAMON
 I don't care about tomorrow,
 anymore. Or three weeks, or a year.
 I'm marrying you, here, because I
 can't stand to keep going if I'm
 not yours. I don't care if it's
 Vegas, and I don't care about what
 my mom says about gambling, and if -
 -

CLARA's eyes twitch. Something in her head.

CLARA
 Gambling.

DAMON
 Well, no, I don't care --

CLARA
GAMBLING! The scratch-it!

DAMON
Who?

CLARA inches her hand towards her pocket, struggles to remove the scratch-it ticket, moves her legs to her hands and begins to feverishly cut the rope with the ticket, to DAMON's shock.

DAMON (CONT'D)
I didn't -- they can cut through that? How --

CLARA smiles a bit.

CLARA
-- convenient, isn't it?

CLARA cuts through it, and looks back. The MEN are moving towards the car to escape. CLARA goes to cut DAMON's rope.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Quick, hon! Stay still.

DAMON
I'll try.

They both quietly chuckle.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

MORREY and BLUM, driving. MORREY spots the garage.

MORREY
Man, oh, man.

BLUM
Huh.

MORREY
Well, if they're anywhere close, they're out here. Shit's been abandoned for ten years. Run down. Place smells like heroin and wild dog.

BLUM spots a vehicle up ahead.

BLUM
Figures to be it.

MORREY
 Figures.

INT. DETERIORATED PARKING GARAGE - DAY

PETER leads CARLO and SMUDGE into the car, as DAMON and CLARA slowly make their way up and out. As the men get into the car, they see a POLICE CAR outside.

PETER
 Shit! Everyone down!

They all duck but SMUDGE, who stands like a statue.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Down, not still, dipshit!

SMUDGE drops himself.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

MORREY and BLUM circle the outside of the garage, detecting no activity, lights, anything.

MORREY
 Ain't shit. Huh. Waitresses, huh?

BLUM
 Yeah. They never call back.

MORREY
 Uh... huh.

They begin to drive off.

INT. DETERIORATED PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

DAMON and CLARA react.

DAMON
 Shit!

EXT. DETERIORATED PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

PETER reacts.

PETER
 Shit.

He starts up the Travellink, begins to drive, and --

INTERCOM
WELCOME TO TRAVELLINK!

The voice BLARES into PETER's face and he suddenly jerks the car, spinning into the road and hitting a POLE on the edge. They collect themselves, hurried.

SMUDGE
Does this we mean we --

The car's AIRBAGS FLY onto the men and the ALARM blares.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

MORREY and BLUM hear the blares and begin to turn back.

EXT. DETERIORATED PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

MORREY and BLUM speak to DAMON and CLARA as the MEN sit in the police car's backseat.

MORREY
Well, that's fucked. You guys going to be alright? We provide witness protection, health specialist --

CLARA
It's really alright. We've -- got somewhere to be tomorrow.

DAMON and CLARA smile at each other.

BLUM finds the scratch-it on the ground behind them, and begins to play. He looks up, ecstatic.

BLUM
Fuck me, boys! We REALLY hit the lottery tonight!

He begins to wave the ticket and dance around. The others can see he clearly lost but they play along with him.

INT. POLICE CAR - MORNING

MORREY and BLUM on duty.

BLUM
I really thought --

MORREY
Uh huh.

BLUM
It looked --

MORREY
Uh huh.

They continue to drive on, both on the verge of laughter.

INT. JAIL CELL - MORNING

PETER, CARLO, and SMUDGE share a tight, cramped cell. They each keep moving slightly to adjust.

SMUDGE
Gosh, it's hot, guys. Do you think one of you guys could go to the store and get a fan or somethin'?

The other two look at him rather astonished by his continued lack of awareness and stupidity.

SMUDGE (CONT'D)
(reading their looks)
What if I said please!

He chuckles lightly. The other two sigh.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - MORNING

DAMON and CLARA begin to peruse the dresses.

DAMON
What about this one? Looks nice.

CLARA
They did say it was the cheapest option.

DAMON smiles.

DAMON
... and it looks beautiful.

DAMON begins to kiss her, and as they embrace, DAMON feels a KICK from CLARA's stomach. They smile.

THE END