

FACE THE MUSIC

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FADE IN:

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

An Indian man in his late 20's, PRATESH, sits idly behind the wheel with a beat-up iPhone to his ear.

Relaxing SITAR MUSIC plays over the radio.

PRATESH  
(vague accent)  
Lyft seems like a better choice...  
I know, you hate the mustache.  
Everyone hates the mustache!

He looks in his rearview mirror, sees a MAN in a suit strutting towards him.

PRATESH (CONT'D)  
Everything will work out. I have a fare. Yes, my first in a month, *ha-ha, hilarious*. I'll be home late. I love you. ... I said I love y--

He puts his phone down as HEATH, 33, clumsily bursts into the cab. Tall, chiseled, and clearly a couple cocktails deep, he's instantly disgusted by the dingy cab interior.

Heath holds up 1 finger, points to his bluetooth earpiece.

HEATH  
He's NOT on to us, Greg! Stop being a pussy. He'll never notice it missing. What? I'm in a cab... yeah dickhead a yellow cab! You're killing my buzz, I'm hangin up. Go bang your yenta wife for me. What, can't hear you...

Heath pushes the earpiece, checks his phone - 2% battery.

PRATESH  
Where to, my friend?

He eyeballs Pratesh's taxi license posted in the back seat.

HEATH  
Well, Pra-tesh? Don't they usually anglocize your names? ... Not important. Jersey. Exit 117.

PRATESH

Oh! Haven't been there in a while.  
Thank you for not choosing Uber.

HEATH

Don't flatter yourself, I would've  
but my phone's about to die.

PRATESH

Right. As the saying goes, a dead  
phone is a cabbie's best friend.

HEATH

Yeah, nice one, Chapelle. Yo, home  
to bel-air.

Pratesh smiles, and nods. Doesn't move.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Drive.

Pratesh rips the car into gear, and we're off.

Heath tries to get comfortable on the torn leather seat. He  
sniffs, and recoils in disgust.

He tries to roll down his window, but nothing happens.

HEATH (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Child locks? The hell...

(to Tesh)

Quite the odor in here. Didya  
spill an entire spice rack?

Pratesh points to a GANESHA incense tray on the dash.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Ah yes, eau de elephant dung.

Pratesh's discomfort registers with Heath. He scoffs.

HEATH (CONT'D)

I didn't mean it like that. I'm  
sure Babar is just as good as the  
rest of those deities. If it makes  
you feel any better, I dig this  
Ravi Shankar shit.

They both listen to the soothing sound for a beat.

PRATESH

I'll be sure to tell my wife. She makes me listen. Says it keeps me humble, remember where I come from.

HEATH

Ah, you're one of those guys? We can fix that... That reminds me, you got a charger?

Pratesh opens the glovebox, pulls out an iPhone charger.

PRATESH

The cord jiggles, you have to hold it in place.

HEATH

Of course it does...

Heath plugs the charger into a port, sticks the other end in the phone, which lights up. He opens SMS. Licks his lips.

There's a message from KELLY with a sexy lingerie picture and some suggestive emojis:

*UR A FUCKIN STUD! \*DOLLAR SIGNS - PEACE SIGN/TONGUE FACE - EGGPLANT - PEACH - RAINDROPS\**

PRATESH

Big night planned?

HEATH

Tesh, you get me home in under 40, and I'll give you the biggest tip of your life... that's what she'll be getting later tonight.

He holds the photo up, then stares at Pratesh in the rearview, dead serious.

HEATH (CONT'D)

And the shaft.

Heath holds his gaze, pops a BLUE PILL, and swallows it dry.

The music stops as if on cue. Pratesh hasn't moved.

HEATH (CONT'D)

(laughs)

Tesh, you're alright. I like you. What's your deal, man? Why you drivin a cab? You're young. You don't strike me as a stereotype.

PRATESH

... Thank you? I needed work, and my wife knew a guy, so--

HEATH

Does the wife wipe your ass too?

PRATESH

No, I manage to do that myself.

HEATH

There's your problem. You should strive for someone to wipe you! Ain't that the American dream?

Heath leans forward, sticks his head into the divider as if Pratesh asked him to. He clearly didn't.

HEATH (CONT'D)

You're lucky you met me tonight. Life has clearly taken us down different roads. Let's converge. Let me teach you how to look out for numero uno. ... that's Spanish.

Pratesh doesn't seem to buy what Heath's selling.

HEATH (CONT'D)

You a submissive bitch, Tesh? I can ask that, because we're friends. You give off that vibe.

Pratesh is taken aback, searches for his response.

HEATH (CONT'D)

You wanna drive a cab forever?

PRATESH

... Well, no, I was actually looking into Lyft...

HEATH

Lyft?! So you'd trade in this yellow shitbox for a faggy pink mustache? I can say that, my second cousin is a fag... we think.

PRATESH

That's not cool--It's an honest and more stable living...

HEATH

You're breakin my heart with this nice guy routine, Tesh. No matter what they say, nice guys don't finish last. Nice guys don't even finish. Nice guys get finished off!

PRATESH

You don't really know me...

HEATH

I know you, and I know you probably find this blasphemous, but you gotta take the bull by the horns! I did, and you wouldn't believe how many rupees I made tonight.

Pratesh is both impressed and ticked off.

PRATESH

As much as I respect your Indian knowledge, can you stop that?

HEATH

Call me an asshole. Don't tiptoe around it. Put your foot down!

PRATESH

No, I... Confrontation with a passenger isn't encouraged.

HEATH

Well put your foot down on the gas, then. That pill doesn't have unlimited powers.

He leans back in his chair, recoils again from the smell.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Tell ya what, if you're so hellbent on drivin for a livin, consider this an audition. I'll need a chauffeur soon. I'll take you under my wing. Show you how the other half lives.

Pratesh snarls, turns, opens his mouth ready to reply...

HEATH (CONT'D)

Put some more music on, it's a morgue in here.

Pratesh sighs, gives up, slides in another CD.

LOUD SHRILL BOLLYWOOD STYLE MUSIC fills the cab.

MUSIC  
*MENI-OPPI-WAHHHH-AH-AAHAHA, EEEEEEE--*

HEATH  
 (grimacing)  
 Ah, Christ, what the hell is this?

PRATESH  
 Punjabi hits. My wife--

HEATH  
 --Forget it. I don't even wanna  
 know. I'm just gonna close my eyes  
 and think about the poon job I'm  
 about to hit.

PRATESH  
 (under his breath)  
 Nice one, Chapelle.

Heath hears him, smiles, winks, then closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

The music slowly builds as Heath's eyes flutter open -  
 louder, louder, LOUDER! He shakes the cobwebs, looks out the  
 window. There are no more streets, just trees and dirtroads.

PRATESH  
 There was an accident, this is the  
 fastest alternative route.

GPS  
 Turn left.

HEATH  
 How is this... There isn't even a  
 left turn to make. The fuck, Tesh?

Heath checks his phone - Dead. The cord lays beside it, out.

The music builds into a crescendo. It's impossible to think.

HEATH (CONT'D)  
 What time is it? Turn this down.

PRATESH

Umm, can you turn *that* down? I  
wasn't going to say anything but...

Pratesh nods towards Heath's crotch. He has a ~~giant~~ moderate  
erection. He tries to tuck it down.

HEATH

Why you lookin?!! Nevermind that,  
get back on the highway! I need to  
get home. ... God, this music!

PRATESH

If the GPS says this is the fastest  
route, this is the fastest route.

GPS

In 100 feet, turn around.

HEATH

You even let electronic women  
control you! I changed my mind,  
I'm not hiring you. I got no time  
for beta bitches.

Pratesh has had it. He turns towards Heath.

PRATESH

Listen dick, you don't know me. I  
was fine before I met you, and I'm  
gonna be fine after you--

HEATH

WATCH THE ROAD!

Pratesh turns just in time to see a stupid DEER staring back  
at him. He slams the brakes and cuts the wheel...

FADE OUT.

OVER BLACK WE HEAR LOUD ASS BOLLYWOOD HITS BUILD...

GPS (PRE-LAP)

In 50 feet, turn around.

FADE IN:

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

Heath's eyes slowly open. He lets out an agonizing MOAN that  
barely cuts through the music, and realizes he's upside down.

HEATH

Fuck. ... Tesh?

Pratesh is stuck upside down in the driver's seat, motionless, bloody, possibly dead.

Heath unbuckles his seat belt and FLOPS down onto the roof of the car. He registers his predicament - leg injury, bloody face, who knows what other injuries. The only body part that seems to be intact is the boner that stands in defiance.

The Cab is crunched, making it nearly impossible to maneuver.

Heath sniffs, recoils, realizes the GANESHA incense tray is now directly under his nose. He tries to push it away with his chin to no avail.

MUSIC

*MENI-OPPI-WAHHHH-AH-AAHAHA, EEEEE--*

HEATH

Shut the fuck up!

Heath snakes in pain towards the now shattered divider and reaches for the stereo with all his might as Track 4 turns to Track 5. Too short.

HEATH (CONT'D)

It's only on song 5?! Teshhhh!

Nothing, no movement. It's not looking good for ol' Tesh.

Heath notices his cell phone tossed above his seat. He uses his injured leg to kick it closer, and manages it to get it in his hand. He pushes the lock screen button - no dice.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Cocksuckinfuckinpieceof--

He spots the charger laying precariously near his crotch.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Dick don't fail me now.

He pokes at the cord with his wood a few times, manages to snare it and drag it towards him. He gets a finger on it.

HEATH (CONT'D)

You got this!!! AHHHHH!!!!

Heath tenses up, and flops his body around so that he is near the port. He GROANS as he shoves the charger into place. Somehow the incense tray remains at nose level. He tries fruitlessly to blow it away.

He uses two fingers to get the charger into the phone. A CHARGING ICON appears on screen.

Not a second later, it disappears. He can't wrangle the cord back up in this position.

HEATH (CONT'D)  
Fuckin jiggly fuck.

He uses his less hurt leg to kick the back of Pratesh's seat.

HEATH (CONT'D)  
Come on, dammit. Wake up!

Nothing. There's nothing more Heath can really do, but lay crunched, smelling the incense and listening to the music.

MUSIC  
*AHHH-BOOO-DAAA, ME-YAPPI-YAAAA...*

Heath breathes deep, panic setting in. He stares out a somehow intact window. Idea.

He stretches his index finger and latches on to the window button. Presses. It doesn't budge.

HEATH  
I'm not a fuckin child!!!

He stares out the window, in a heap, on the verge of sobs.

A DEER walks up the window. Stares in.

HEATH (CONT'D)  
Hey. Hey! Go get help, girl.

The deer cocks it's head like a dog, just stares at him.

HEATH (CONT'D)  
FUCK YOU, BAMBI! YOU DID THIS, YOU  
DOE EYED CUNT! I'LL EAT YOUR SOUL--

SUDDENLY Pratesh flails to life as if electrocuted. He SCREAMS BLOODY MURDER, scaring the deer off.

HEATH (CONT'D)  
Tesh! Tesh! Calm down. Tessshhh!

Pratesh kicks a leg free, and smashes the VOLUME KNOB on the stereo. Max volume - The music now DEAFENINGLY LOUD.

Pratesh shakes and screams a few more times, then passes out.

HEATH (CONT'D)  
You fuckin LOSER! HELLLLP!

Heath uses every last ounce of energy to try and wriggle free, but passes out nose first into the incense tray.

FADE TO BLACK.

FEMALE VOICE (PRE-LAP)  
No pulse. This poor bastard is gone.

FADE IN:

INT. TAXI CAB - MORNING

Track 17 blasts. We can't escape the music.

MUSIC  
YEMMY-YEMMY-YEMMY AHMA-AHMA-AHMA...

POV - eyes slowly open to see BOOTS walk past a window, as EMERGENCY LIGHTS flicker in the distance.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)  
This one's alive!

An angelic FEMALE EMT smashes a window. She peers in, shines a light on...

HEATH  
Am I happy to see you.

She moves the light on his boner, still going strong.

FEMALE EMT  
I can see that. Hang on!

She painfully drags Heath from the crunched cab. Heath slips out the window with one final YELP.

FEMALE EMT (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Man, are you lucky.

We linger in the cab for a final shot of Pratesh's dead body as the CD comes to a triumphant end.

FADE OUT.